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## EVENTS OF THE WEEK

THE Committee Stage of the Trade Unions Bill has been occupying most of the time of the House of Commons since we last went to press. On Monday, having secured only five words of the Bill, the Government introduced the guillotine, and the Labour Party walked out of the House in protest. On Tuesday, however, both sections of the Opposition were again in attendance, and the cross-examination of the Attorney-General as to the meaning of the Bill was continued. Even the Government seems now to be alive to the extreme difficulty of defining a general strike in an Act of Parliament, and to be making a

desperate effort to remove the more glaring ambiguities and absurdities from the Bill. Clause One has already been transformed by Government amendments, and important changes in other clauses are foreshadowed. The necessity for these amendments, if a comprehensible measure is to be placed on the Statute Book, has been proved incontestably in debate, but the mystery remains as to how, after six months' consideration by a Cabinet Committee, so incoherent and ill-digested a Bill could have been produced.

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In our leading article last week, we pointed out that serious ambiguities still remain in Clause One after its drastic amendment. With one of these—the ambiguity which lies in the words "that trade or industry," which we illustrated by asking whether the 'busmen will have the right to strike in support of the Underground men—the Attorney-General has now attempted to deal. An amendment has been put down in the following terms:—

"Without prejudice to the generality of the expression 'trade or industry,' workmen shall for the purposes of the foregoing Sub-section be deemed to be within the same trade or industry if their wages or conditions of employment are determined in accordance with the conclusion of the same Joint Industrial Council, Conciliation Board, or other similar body, or in accordance with agreements made with the same employer or group of employers."

It seems probable that the 'busmen and Underground men would come in the category of making agreements with the same "group of employers," but that phrase seems to require further definition. Are the engineering and shipbuilding employers, for instance, in the same group?

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The main ambiguity with which we dealt last week, as to the legality of sympathetic strikes under the Bill, remains untouched; and the Attorney-General indiscreetly allowed himself to be drawn on Tuesday into pronouncing upon the legality or otherwise of various hypothetical strikes. "Suppose," said Mr. Thomas, "the miners have engaged in a legitimate trade dispute, and the railwaymen and other transport workers feel that it is their duty to go to their help, and, in doing so, they 'inflict hardship upon the community.' Will their action be legal?" "No. It could only be a strike which was designed to put pressure upon the Government to compel them to act," replied Sir Douglas Hogg. "That, in my view, would be illegal and illegitimate either by this Bill or independent of this Bill." "Then all sympathetic strikes will be illegal," declared Mr. Thomas. "Not so," said Sir Walter Greaves-Lord, the Tory K.C.:—

"Take a strike in an industry producing a particular article. The employers in that industry choose to make attempts to import what they ordinarily produce in order to keep their business alive. You might get men in other industries who would say, 'If that kind of thing goes on, this strike will be broken. . . .

We will refuse to handle these imported articles, or we will refuse to work if our employers buy these imported articles and allow these employers to continue their business.' In these circumstances, you would get a sympathetic strike which was designed purely and simply for the purpose of perfecting arrangements brought about by the strike. That, as I understand it, would not be touched in the slightest degree by this Bill."

This seemed very illuminating, until Sir Douglas Hogg, challenged by Mr. Lloyd George, declared that it would be illegal in a miners' strike for the railwaymen to refuse to handle imported coal, which suggests that even the Tory lawyers differ in their interpretation of the Bill.

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The most curious example of the pitfalls of drafting is, however, to be found in the amendments intended to put lock-outs into the same position as strikes. One amendment, carried without discussion under the guillotine, provides that "any lock-out is illegal if it has any object other than or in addition to the furtherance of a trade dispute within the trade or industry in which the employers locking-out are engaged and is a lock-out *designed or calculated to coerce the Government*. . . ." But this obviously necessitates a definition of the term "lock-out." In Clause 8, therefore, the Government propose to add:—

"The expression 'lock-out' means the closing of a place of employment or the suspension of work, or the refusal by an employer to continue to employ any number of persons employed by him in consequence of a dispute, *done with a view to compelling those persons, or to aid another employer in compelling persons employed by him to accept terms or conditions of or affecting employment.*"

It will be seen, on examination, that any lock-out designed to coerce the Government and therefore illegal under Clause 1, is not a lock-out at all by the definition in Clause 8, because it is not "done with a view to compelling" the persons locked out "to accept terms or conditions of or affecting employment." In fact the two amendments neatly cancel out!

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It will probably require a certain clarity of mind to avoid confusion in respect of the various wage claims now being put forward in the engineering and shipbuilding industries. In the first place, it must be realized that while the employers in these industries are organized in two entirely independent bodies, many firms have interests in both industries, and therefore the personnel of these bodies is to some small extent the same. On the side of labour, there are a few unions exclusively concerned with ordinary engineering, and a few exclusively with shipbuilding, but the vast majority of the fifty odd unions concerned in engineering are also concerned in shipbuilding, though their relative interests in the two industries are by no means equal. These fifty unions are acting together in the negotiations with the Engineering Employers' Federation, to which we referred last week. But two separate applications have been made to the Shipbuilding Employers' Federation, one by the unions of boilermakers and shipwrights for an increase of ten shillings a week, and the other by the Federation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Trades, to which most of the other unions belong. The latter claim mentions no precise figure, and in this it is similar to the claim against the engineering employers. A meeting to consider the claim by the Federation of Trades will be held after the meeting between all the unions and the engineering employers, which is taking place as we go to press, and clearly the outcome of the first will not be without its influence on the second meeting.

While the British police have been raiding the offices of the Russian Trade Delegation in London, the presence of the Russians has been one of the chief features of the Economic Conference at Geneva. The contrast is significant. Anyone who gives his mind seriously to the troubles of British industry knows how largely our fortunes depend on securing freer conditions for international trade, and reversing the trend towards national exclusiveness which has been so marked in Europe since the war. And everyone who seeks to promote healthier international conditions knows how important it is to deal with Russia along sensible lines and facilitate the growth of commercial relations between her and the "capitalist" States of Europe. At Geneva, accordingly, our representatives seek to improve relations and remove misunderstandings. And at Geneva it is observed with restrained satisfaction that the Russians, behind their inevitable façade of high-sounding phrases, are manifesting a desire for co-operation, are, at least, very anxious for foreign credits, and disposed to recognize that they must behave themselves in order to obtain them. Sir William Joynson-Hicks, who cares for none of these things, chooses this moment to take a step which obviously is not calculated to facilitate trade with Russia, or to create the atmosphere in which commercial intercourse can develop. We discuss the significance of his vagaries on another page. Meanwhile, the Economic Conference goes steadily on, in a far saner atmosphere, and resolutions on the lines of the Bankers' Manifesto, supported by the weightiest authorities from many countries, are being evolved.

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The Report of the Southborough Committee on the Disinterested Management of Public Houses is a disappointing document. Jeune, hesitant, and inconclusive, it provides the statistically minded reader with a few new facts; but it fails to discover, in the labyrinth of possible inferences, any positive clue to the solution of its problems. The Committee was hampered by the consciousness that most of the considerations relevant to a serious examination of the drink question were outside its terms of reference—it has not, for example, been able to discuss the scope and character of the licensing laws or the highly controversial question of clubs. The effect of these limitations has been to restrict its tentative conclusions to two topics—the experiments in State management at Carlisle and elsewhere, and the Public-house Trust movement. As regards the former, we find ourselves, after reading the Report, pretty much where we were before. The Carlisle, Gretna, and Annan experiments are run on financially sound lines; some of their results are encouraging; it is not clear whether on the whole they make for social progress or not; therefore, while positive recommendations cannot be made as to the extension of such experiments, it is well that they should continue. As regards the Trust movement, the lead which the Committee gives is equally valuable. Much good has been done, but it is not possible to extend its scope by legislative enactment; and at present it hardly touches the fringe of the problem. We are entitled to expect something more imaginative than this; and the next Committee (there is, we understand, another one in the offing) must clearly be given a freer hand.

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The foreign trade returns for April are, on the whole, encouraging. Imports totalled £100.8 millions, exports £52.6 millions, and re-exports £11.8 millions, these figures being 88.8 per cent., 84.7 per cent., and 109.6 per cent. respectively of the corresponding figures for March. March, of course, had three working days

more. The visible adverse trade balance for April (movements of coin and bullion excluded) was £36.3 millions, making £155.4 millions for the first four months of the year: this is £22.0 millions in excess of the corresponding adverse balance for the first four months of 1926. The position, however, appears to be improving as regards our staple exports. Of the five great industries which account collectively for some 50 per cent. of our total exports, two—iron and steel, and woollens—are doing substantially better than a year ago; two—coal and machinery—are doing not less well; and the remaining one, cotton, though earning considerably less, is exporting considerably more. The volume of cotton goods exported is up, as compared with April last, by about 20 per cent., but their value (£10.66 millions) is £0.88 millions less. The most hopeful sign is the increase in iron and steel exports. These were valued at £5.67 millions as compared with 5.17 millions a year ago. This marked advance in the demand for iron and steel would seem to point to a forward tendency, generally, in the world's productive activities. Meanwhile, the Live Register unemployment figure has fallen below the million mark.

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The German Reichstag has been much entertained by the passing of the Law for the Defence of the Republic. This Bill, which provides for the exclusion of the ex-Emperor, and confers extraordinary powers upon the President in times of crisis, has been bitterly attacked for five years by every Nationalist speaker in Germany; but when the Reichstag was invited to give the Bill the force of law for a new term of years, the Nationalist Party joined with the other coalition groups in proposing the prolongation. They were, of course, compelled to do so, or to drop out of the coalition; and they preferred inconsistency to loss of office. The Socialist Parties were naturally quick to emphasize the elasticity of the Nationalist conscience. That a Bill of such a character should have been prolonged in its operation with Nationalist approval is, in a sense, remarkable. The German habit of dealing with necessary business in a businesslike way seems likely to make the German Nationalists a useful Parliamentary party, so long as they are held strictly to the option of co-operating with others in office, or playing a lone hand in permanent opposition.

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In this connection, the rally of the German Steel Helmet Association in Berlin has considerable significance. First of all, it is highly satisfactory that the largest and most important of the German ex-Service-men's organizations should have assembled for such a tremendous demonstration without causing disorder, or attacking the republican constitution. Secondly, it is equally satisfactory that this organization should have taken such pains to show that its practice and constitution do not conflict with the disarmament clauses of the Treaty of Versailles, notwithstanding that a revision of the Treaty is one of its declared objects. It would be useless to deny that all these ex-Service-men's organizations have a strong political colouring, and that their demonstrations, however legitimately conducted, give an extraordinary vigour to nationalist policy in domestic and foreign affairs. It seems, however, that the "Stahlhelm" is sincere in the adoption of its new watchword "Hinein in den Staat"—action within the bounds of the constitution—and that the policy of the "putsch" is to be replaced by co-operation in the working of the Republican State, even though the Steel Helmets may look vaguely to an ultimate restoration of the monarchy by constitutional means.

The summary report of the United States Census of Manufactures for 1925 contains some exceedingly interesting facts. The output of the factories of the United States appears to have been about 80 per cent. larger in quantity in 1925 than in 1919. But the numbers of wage-earners employed by the factories declined in the same period by about 7 per cent. These two facts indicate, of course, a remarkable increase in productivity per head. But they also suggest another inference. The American population has been increasing rapidly, the numbers engaged in agriculture have notoriously declined, and there has been no serious unemployment. In what occupations, then, have the growing numbers, together with those displaced from agriculture and manufacture, been absorbed? Obviously, in distributive, advertising, and commercial business. In Great Britain, a similar shifting from production proper to distribution is to be observed; and heads are often shaken over this tendency as a sign of industrial decay. But the truth would rather seem to be that it represents the ordinary course of progress. The American experience bears this out. And we must expect this tendency to continue on both sides of the Atlantic. Another noteworthy fact in the American Census is the great increase in the use of power. Primary horse-power employed in factories in 1925 was 60 per cent. greater than in 1914.

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The South African Flag Conference has hopelessly broken down. The majority of the Government are determined, at all costs, to exclude the Union Jack from the flag. The Flag Vigilance Committees, while perfectly ready to agree to inclusion of the old republican colours, are equally determined to accept no flag in which the Union Jack does not figure. Their obstinacy is due, of course, to their conviction that the flag issue has become the test of the Nationalist Party's sincerity in abandoning their separatist propaganda. The Government is now committed to forcing their own design, if necessary, through a joint sitting of both Houses; but General Hertzog gave a pledge, before departing for the Imperial Conference, that a referendum should be taken before the Bill came into operation. General Hertzog and his chief supporters, Mr. Havenga, and Mr. Tielman Roos are known to have been anxious to drop the Bill and allow the whole question to stand over; but the Labour Party, for purely party reasons, have given their support to Dr. Malan and the extreme Nationalists.

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We are very glad to learn, from an Admiralty statement in the House of Commons, that the Harper Report on the Battle of Jutland is to be published. The suppression of this report, which had been approved by a Board with little direct personal interest in the Jutland controversies, was largely responsible for transforming a scientific discussion of the technical lessons of the battle into a rather undignified squabble between rival naval schools. Its publication may not add very much to our knowledge of the battle; but it should be of real assistance to students of naval history, and, what is even more important, should go a long way to set the Navy right with the public, and allay suspicions that ought never to have been aroused. No disclosures—and it is very doubtful whether there will be any of a sensational character—could be half so damaging to the Service as the idea that facts were being deliberately suppressed, and we hope that the Admiralty's statement that the Report would be published "as approved by the Board of Admiralty" means that we are to have Captain Harper's text unexpurgated and unrevised.



## THE RAID ON ARCOS

WE write under the disadvantage of not knowing what the Home Secretary may be able to tell the House of Commons on Thursday before this article appears. We doubt, however, whether this will prove to be a very serious disadvantage; our readers will be in a position to judge. It is true that a final judgment on the remarkable action of the Government must be deferred until a great many points have been cleared up which are now obscure. But it seems most improbable that these points will have been cleared up on Thursday. The Home Secretary may tell us something about the nature of the documents which have been removed from Arcos, though it is not unlikely that he will prefer to maintain an attitude of vague portentousness. But, in any case, this is not the only matter, or the chief matter, which needs to be cleared up. The Home Secretary has taken a most unusual and high-handed step, carrying a serious international significance. Did he act heedlessly and irresponsibly, on the principle that it would be absurd to study the proprieties where the Russians are concerned? Or did he act with due consideration? The account which he has so far given leaves a most unsatisfactory impression.

What is the story, as Sir William Joynson-Hicks has told it to the House of Commons? A certain official document was missing, presumably from the War Office. The Secretary for War was of opinion that this document "was or had been improperly in the possession of a person employed in the premises occupied by Arcos, Limited, at 49, Moorgate." The War Secretary satisfied the Home Secretary that he had good grounds for this opinion. The Home Secretary consulted the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary, and "with their knowledge and assent" authorized the police to apply for a warrant to "search the premises occupied by Arcos, Limited, at 49, Moorgate." (It is important at this point to proceed verbatim):—

"The building bearing that address is shared by Arcos, Limited, and the Russian Trade Delegation, and there is free inter-communication throughout the building. The warrant accordingly authorized the search of the premises occupied by Arcos, Limited, and the Trade Delegation, and the search was carried out in strict conformity with the warrant."

The search lasted for several days. It was a thorough-going affair. It entailed boring into safes with the aid of oxy-acetylene; and pictures of these safes in their demolished condition have been a popular feature of this week's evening papers. "The document in question was not found," but a great mass of documents have been removed for examination, including, according to the Russian accounts, the secret ciphers, the right to use which in communicating with their home Government is expressly conferred on the official agents by the terms of the Trade Agreement.

Now this account leaves several important points obscure. First, did the Home Secretary intend to authorize the searching of the offices of the Russian Trade Delegation, as well as those of Arcos? The first statement which he made about the matter, on Friday, May 18th, suggests that he did not. He then told the House of Commons that he had authorized the police to apply for a warrant "to search the premises of

Arcos." Asked whether he had acted "after Cabinet consultation or consultation with the Foreign Office," he replied on that occasion:—

"This is a matter in which the responsibility rests with the Home Secretary";

and a little later we find him saying:—

"The hon. Member seems to think that this is an exceptional case. Arcos is an English company, and as he quite rightly says with a lot of English officers and employees. When a magistrate issues a search warrant in regard to any particular premises, the question of nationality does not enter into it at all."

In other words, he was insisting last week, after the manner of Mr. Mellon on War Debts, that the affair was a purely domestic one.

He now tells us that "the warrant authorized" the extension of the search to the premises of the Trade Delegation. He does not tell us that he had intended that it should do so, or even that he had contemplated that it might. The point is one of considerable importance, in view of the immunities possessed by the Trade Delegation. The Trade Agreement empowers the official agents:—

"to communicate freely with their own Government and with other official countries by post, telegraph, and wireless telegraphy in cipher, and to receive and dispatch couriers with sealed bags, subject to a limitation of three kilograms per week, which shall be exempt from examination."

It further states that the official agents shall enjoy "immunity from arrest and search." Mr. Locker-Lampson denies that these privileges amount to "diplomatic immunity" for the Delegation premises. Perhaps not; that is a nice question of international law which we shall not explore. But can anyone feel confident that the express immunities, which we have set out above, have not been violated by last week's raid? Has nothing been examined that is "exempt from examination"? Is the forcing of the official agent's safe strictly compatible with "immunity from search"?

Whatever the answers to these questions, it is clearly not for the Home Secretary to pronounce upon them; and here we come to the second serious obscurity in his story. He now informs us that he consulted the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary, and acted "with their knowledge and assent." If so, why did he not say so when the question was first put to him in the House of Commons? Why did he reply evasively that "this is a matter in which the responsibility rests with the Home Secretary?" The responsibility of the Home Secretary, indeed! To decide how far the immunities, conferred by the Trade Agreement, go! To take a step entailing obvious risks—to say the least of it—of putting Great Britain in the position of having violated an international agreement, the strict observance of which we have frequently enjoined upon the Russians in Foreign Office Notes! It is, assuredly, not easy to reconcile the Home Secretary's language with a due appreciation on his part of the diplomatic implications of his action.

But what in any case was the nature of the "consultation" which he belatedly announces? This much, at least, seems clear. If the Home Secretary consulted the Foreign Secretary, the Foreign Secretary omitted to consult his high officials, who were unaware, when the



Russians began to make their protests, that the raid was taking place. Is not this remarkable? Sir Austen Chamberlain must be a singularly well-equipped Foreign Secretary if he can venture to pronounce off-hand, and without any consultation with his experts, on the precise limits of the peculiar immunities conferred by the Trade Agreement, and be confident that those limits could not possibly be exceeded by anything which the police might do in the course of an exhaustive search. Nay, more, questions of legal immunity apart, the workings of Sir Austen's mind must be singularly quick and sure, if he feels able to weigh up, in the course of a casual conversation, the broad reactions on foreign policy of such a raid as this. Really if he is able to decide on an affair of such moment without the advice of his officials, the advocates of economy might profitably consider whether the Foreign Office should not be added to the list of superfluous departments!

The seriousness of the raid is not, of course, confined to the possible infraction of the treaty privileges of the Trade Delegation. "Would there have been," asks the *TIMES*, twitting the Labour Party with their responsiveness to Russian grievances, "the same disinterested outburst if the object of the search had been, say, the branch of a French or an Italian bank, established in the City of London under the auspices of M. Poincaré or of Signor Mussolini?" Surely, the answer is that the outcry would have been much bigger. Will the *TIMES* answer another question? Is it conceivable that the premises of any French or Italian bank, or indeed of any large non-Russian institution, would have been raided in this way, whatever reason there was to suspect that a missing State document was to be found there? After all, the disappearance of official documents is not unprecedented. Is it unduly cynical to suggest that probably every Government in Europe has "improperly" in its possession at this moment copies of some of the secret documents of other Governments? But what precedent is there for a proceeding such as that of last week-end?

On the evidence before us at the moment, the raid seems to have been entered on with the amazing heedlessness and the utter lack of co-ordination which characterize the record of our present Ministers. The sillier sort of Conservative opinion wants strong measures against the "Reds," wants, in fact, to "turn out the Reds" and to put an end to the Trade Agreement. Sir Austen Chamberlain, with his eye on the general objective of the pacification of Europe, wants to preserve the Trade Agreement, and, that being a matter of foreign policy, he is allowed to have his way. But "Jix" represents the sillier sort of Conservative opinion; he wants to harry the Reds and to raid them, in the hope of finding useful material for Tory propaganda, perhaps something really spicy, perhaps something suggesting sinister associations between the Russians and the members of the Labour Party. And so, on the first pretext that offers, he plunges in his ram-stam way, and authorizes a raid without even being clear what he is raiding, much less reflecting on the larger consequences of his action.

Hitherto, the anti-Red extravagances of "Jix" have been one of the minor comedies of our political life. They have now involved us in humiliation. We, at least, find it humiliating to contemplate the probability that we have broken the undertakings which we gave in the Trade Agreement, have done a foolish, violent act, utterly at variance with the traditions of our behaviour towards foreign States, and now may owe a handsome apology to the Soviet Government, which, almost certainly, we shall withhold.

## A NOTE ON ECONOMY—II.

SINCE I called attention in *THE NATION* of April 30th to the large sum paid to the Bank of England for the management of the National Debt, the matter has been taken up in the House of Lords by Lord Arnold, and this week in the House of Commons also. Mr. Churchill's reply was on reasonable lines. He told the House that some reduction in the charge had been effected since the last published figures, and that "since attention has been called to this matter in the Press and in the House of Commons, he is having it made the subject of careful examination." On the figures now given it would be surprising if no further economy is possible. It appears that some 2,250 clerks are employed to deal with 2,500,000 stock accounts, involving 9,000,000 coupons, 750,000 transfers, and the other business attendant on these. It follows that: (1) each coupon and transfer costs on the average about 2s. in round figures for clerks' work, printing, stationery, and postage; (2) each clerk manages to deal with about eighty coupons and seven transfers a week, which, on the basis of a 45-hour week, means that a clerk spends about half an hour (or—to allow a margin of 100 per cent. for errors in the calculation—let us say a quarter of an hour) contemplating the beauties, which are undoubtedly considerable, of each printed dividend warrant. These calculations are crude and doubtless lacking in exactitude. But they offer a *prima facie* case for a further investigation.

The main purpose, however, of my original Note was not an attack on the Bank of England, but a defence of the Civil Service, and an effort to expose the pettiness of the recent attacks on the efficiency and economy of the latter. For what would be said if the figures given above had been found true about a Government Department instead of about a vested institution? I sought by a striking example to deal a blow at the myth, which is coming to be so widely accepted, that Government Departments are extravagant and inefficient compared with large non-governmental institutions. Civil Servants, in my experience, work harder, are better educated, and are paid less than the officials of great companies. I should like, some time, to challenge Lord Inchcape to a detailed comparison between the numbers and cost of the higher staff of the P. and O., including the Board of Directors, and those of the Treasury and the Board of Inland Revenue.

The danger is that, under the stimulus of an economy campaign, which is largely spurious, the Civil Service may be rendered inefficient by being under-staffed and underpaid. We all of us complain at times about the mistakes of the Inland Revenue. But in fact the staff of this Department—having regard to the difficulty, the delicacy, and the magnitude of its work—maintains an amazing standard of ability, courtesy, honesty, and efficiency on standards of pay which would be very low in a private business. As Sir Josiah Stamp said on Tuesday, "in the case of direct taxation an increase of staff could at any time in the last fifty years have yielded results much greater than the expense involved." Undoubtedly it would be a popular move with income tax-payers to decrease the number of those clever and inquisitive people who try to make them pay what they should. But it does not follow that this is an "economy" which would be economical. So in other departments—particularly in the case of the Ministry of Transport. These spurious and petty economies can only have the effect of crippling the Civil Service. One suspects that this, rather than economy, is in fact the half-deliberate object of some of the attacks now being made. In raising my query about the Bank of England, I wanted to find out if some of the champions of

so-called economy would be equally enthusiastic about a saving materially greater in terms of money than those which they were pressing forward, but which did not have the incidental effect of crippling the Civil Service. I find, as I suspected—I do not here include the Chancellor of the Exchequer—that they are not.

But just as I want to increase, rather than diminish, the efficiency of the Civil Service, so also I should think it regrettable if my illustration was to develop into an attack on the Bank of England—as certain supplementary questions in the House of Commons half suggested. We are each entitled to our differences with the Bank and to criticize its policy with all the language at our command. But we must distinguish between the fleeting policies of Governors and the Bank as an institution. The preservation of the integrity, strength, and prestige of the Bank of England is vitally important. Those who believe that a wise management of currency and credit is essential to the prosperity of the country must feel this even more strongly than others. For we have in the Bank of England the only possible instrument of such management.

J. M. KEYNES.

## LONDON UNIVERSITY

THE little-advertised cause of University education has been more to the forefront, this last week or two, than is usual in this country. The celebrations of the centenary of University College have given us here in London some opportunity to realize, and to assess, our indebtedness to the higher learning. And now comes the announcement, which will interest a far wider public than that to which it is immediately addressed, that the question of a site for London University is at last finally settled.

These happenings lend point to the Report, published last week, for the University Grants Committee. That body is responsible for distributing the moneys, at present amounting to some £1.5 millions, annually voted out of public funds for University purposes. The Report of the Committee provides, not only some account of its stewardship, but tabulated statistics (the only statistics of the kind available) which throw light on an obscure portion of the educational field. From these figures we learn that the total income of the British universities, during the year under review, was £4.8 millions (this total excludes the independent incomes of the Oxford and Cambridge colleges), and that the number of students in full-time attendance was 41,600—a small decrease on the figure for the previous year. The financial position and prospects of the various Universities are better on the whole than they have been since the war. But it is rather staggering to reflect that University education with us is still a matter which concerns only  $1\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. of the population, and on which we spend  $\frac{1}{8}$  per cent. or so of the national income—less in a whole year than it costs us to build a battleship. Need we send expeditions to America to investigate the conditions of social and industrial progress with such facts as these staring us in the face?

Exceptional difficulties have long beset the University of London. With some of its colleges—University, King's, Imperial, Bedford, the School of Economics—and with its great medical schools, the general public is not unfamiliar. But for many the conception of a London University has never had the significance which, in the capital city of an Empire, ought to attach to it. And this is partly because the University, as distinct from its constituent colleges, has never had a home of its own. For the last seven years the problem of providing an adequate site for the develop-

ment and extension of its activities has agitated academic circles. Last year, after the failure of one desperate effort after another, the struggle seemed finally lost. Yet on May 12th, Lord Eustace Percy was able to announce at the annual Graduates' Dinner of the University that the much discussed Bloomsbury site was secured to it after all.

This site, now to be purchased from the Duke of Bedford, lies directly north of the British Museum and covers an area of eleven acres. In 1920, it will be remembered, the Government offered to present it to the University on certain conditions, one of which was that King's College should be transferred thither from its present home in the Strand. To these proposals, after protracted negotiations, the authorities of King's College refused to consent, and the Government's option to purchase lapsed last year. It has now been found possible to reopen negotiations—freed this time from the conditions which previously resulted in deadlock—through the instrumentality of a "limited" Government grant and a munificent contribution from the Rockefeller Foundation. The amount of the latter has not been made public, but it is understood that the site will cost in all about half-a-million, and that well over half of the purchase money is to come from the Foundation.

For this happy consummation, acceptable, it is understood to all who have hitherto been parties to a somewhat embittered controversy, great credit will deservedly go to the Vice-Chancellor, Sir William Beveridge. In Sir William are united the statesmanship which has made possible the acquisition of the site "when all chance seemed lost, by this miracle of generosity from overseas," and the imagination which now needs to be brought to bear upon the problem of its development. His speech at the Graduates' Dinner, in reply to Lord Eustace Percy, will rank, among those who are interested in London University and its future, as a historical pronouncement. In the course of it he envisaged, with a felicity of phrase not unworthy of his theme, the possibilities which the purchase of the site now open up, and dwelt upon his hope, which will be widely shared, that London University—"a new University of poor men in a city of immemorial wealth"—may one day attain the recognition from the great interests it is designed to serve that has hitherto been denied to it. We join in believing with Sir William that it is not "idle to dream" of erecting in Bloomsbury "a shrine of youth and learning to rank with the shrine of our history and our liberties by the Thames at Westminster."

## AT ST. STEPHEN'S DOUBTING CASTLE

(BY OUR PARLIAMENTARY CORRESPONDENT.)

*"He therefore that went before (Vain-Confidence by name), not seeing the way before him, fell into a deep pit; which was on purpose there made by the Prince of those grounds to catch vain-glorious fools withal; and was dashed in pieces with his fall."*

BUNYAN.

MANY critics, including especially THE NATION, pointed out before its introduction the fundamental weakness of the Trade Unions Bill. This is, that although it was easy to embody in rotund and high-sounding periods general propositions concerning coercion of the Government by the withdrawal of labour, when it comes to implementing these in a Bill whose detailed words would have to be interpreted by magistrates and judges, the work is impossible; unless, as a matter of fact, you take away from the workman the power to end a contract and cease work; and by so doing create a servile State.

The detailed discussion in Committee has already revealed the hopelessness of the Government's position.



While Sir Douglas Hogg was elaborating in pleasant phrases in the House amiable generalizations, supplemented by half-frantic rhetoric by Lord Birkenhead in the country, he could secure respect and applause. When he attempted to defend the words by which he was endeavouring to transform these principles into statute law, he was like a beetle on its back. After two days of criticism, from men in all quarters of the House, he has been compelled to put down amendments so completely altering the operative clause as practically to make a new Bill requiring a new second reading. But his new amendments are open to as vital objections as the original drafting, and in consequence the Government in despair can only clamp down the guillotine and, as one hopes, "pray to God that He forgive us all."

It is to be noted that the difficulty does not arise, as in fierce controversial Bills, over a question of fundamental divergence of ideals or ideas. It arises because principles which all parties are willing to accept are only, if at all, being embodied in law by words whose practical results all parties (in words at least) purport to repudiate. In confused and contrary explanations, the Attorney-General has already given, for example, five different and contradictory definitions of a general strike. His political "stock" (to use a common crude expression) among his own party has probably sunk some 50 per cent. This is not altogether his own fault. He is left entirely alone. His only support is the occasional intervention of the Solicitor-General, who knows nothing whatever about the subject; generally contradicts what his superior Law Officer has said, and seems to regard trade unions with the same disgust as he regards the Revised Prayer Book. The Tories wanted a little piece of Labour baiting; the prevention of the inconveniences of last year; and the putting of trade unionists out of action as far as politics were concerned. They are finding it more difficult than they realized to fulfil these excellent intentions. One of their lawyers, Mr. O'Connor, of Luton, finds that under the Bill, two or three million trade unionists would have to be clapped into gaol; the great bulk of whom would have not the slightest idea that they were performing an illegal act. Another, Mr. Mitchell Banks, of Swindon, hitherto the "hammer of the Socialists," and leader of the Die-hards, finding a draught blowing from the Tory trade unionists of his industrial constituency, professes grave misgivings whether the Bill does not as a matter of fact render illegal all sympathetic strikes; which if realized by the indomitable inhabitants of that dismal city will obviously result in leaving Mr. Banks homeless, so far as Parliament is concerned, at the next election. So the Attorney-General writhes into ever fresh efforts to define the undefinable and to appease the unappeasable. Only the leaders are to be clapped into gaol, although the inconvenience and hardship to the public is produced by the withdrawal of work by the million and not by the rhetoric of the few; and the leaders hitherto have acted as a restraining force, as in the Miners' Federation, against the invariable ballot for starting a strike or its continuance. As in all attempts to imprison leaders it has been found that God is able to raise up from stones children unto Abraham. As to definitions of what is a trade or industry; of what causes sufficient hardship to a people to coerce a Government, of what is "furthering" a strike (a word which would certainly have ensured the Prince of Wales being clapped into gaol last year for subscribing to the Miners' Distress Fund; and of how you are going to make it a penal offence not only for a man to leave work, but for a man to refuse to accept work (under conditions unstated and unknown)—all this remains entirely conjectural.

As one listens to the so-called arguments on these subjects, one is filled less with moral indignation than with a kind of intellectual disgust. An Inquiry or Commission sitting for a year could hardly have found a solution for them. Without preparation, this miserable concoction has been thrown into the Houses of Parliament as just one more example of the method of a Government which will stand out as the one most conspicuous during the last half-century for fumbling and blundering among great issues.

The Committee debate has been almost entirely conducted by lawyers; and when any particular lawyer sits

down, a covey of lawyers from all parts of the House arises to continue the discussion. This does not make for an impression of self-sacrificing ardour, or even of self-sacrificing honesty. But it maintains committee discussions on a very high level of intellectual precision; and personally I have found these close-knit analyses of the meaning of words and phrases far more interesting than many rather spluttering and more emotional displays. It is complete nonsense, of course, to say, as some of the popular newspapers do say, that the Labour Party has been guilty either of obstruction, or of discourteous interruption, or of failure to challenge the Tory lawyer defenders of the words of the Bill at their own game. This is the one question upon which Labour trade-union leaders and Labour lawyers know intimately every implication of every word; while the Tory lawyers show plainly that they know nothing about trade unions or trade-union law, except in so far as they have been briefed for the occasion. And the result is that Labour is putting up a better intellectual opposition to the Bill than any that has been heard for the last few years.

Sir Henry Slessor, the ex-Solicitor-General, has not only shown intimate knowledge of the subject; but a power of slashing and eloquent attack which he has never previously revealed in Parliamentary debate, and which has left Sir Douglas Hogg often with complete inability to reply. If the latter has halved his reputation, the former has certainly doubled his. Mr. Rosslyn Mitchell, a Glasgow solicitor who defeated Mr. Asquith at Paisley, though occasionally inclined to the distressingly lachrymose, has raked the Bill fore and aft, when dealing with points of legal interpretation. The sudden resurrection of Mr. Sidney Webb has been one of the conspicuous features of the Parliamentary scene. He has been practically silent for the last three years, and most men thought he would continue silent and ineffective to the end. But knowing everything that there is to be known about trade unionism, and with pure intellectual contempt for the ignorance of the party opposite, he has made speeches which have been rapturously cheered by his own followers; and when interrupted, has replied to the ignorant with such quick and devastating answers that after a time no man durst ask him any question. Of the actual trade-union leaders, Mr. Thomas has shown most energy and skill, not only in speech, but in pertinent question and interruption, which has sent the whole realm of cloud-cuckoo-land constructed by the Law Officers of the Crown suddenly tumbling to the ground. Any detached observer, entirely indifferent to the subject at issue, listening to this dialectic, could not fail to be interested and inspired by these clashes of mind with mind. Unfortunately not a word of this devastating criticism and inept defence is published for the delectation of the readers of the popular Press.

Perhaps the man who has most increased his reputation in a short time is Mr. Harney, K.C., the Liberal Member for South Shields. He has exhibited himself as of Front Bench calibre. With his height and distinction of appearance, his free use of appropriate gesticulation, the tones of an orator which are found in his voice, he has, without a note in his hand, combined smashing criticism on legal points with a human appeal never extending beyond the bounds in which sentiment becomes sentimentalism. He is one of the few Liberals who have been rapturously cheered by the Labour members, just because he has been putting points dealing both with legality and liberty better than they have put them themselves. Mr. Garro Jones is also increasing his reputation.

It is perhaps unfair to criticize the Tory benches. Their sole duty, as in past times, is to keep their mouths shut and to vote for the Government. They work in relays. A portion of the "relay" occupy half-empty benches, and gaze in owlish amazement at technical arguments they have little capacity for understanding. The other portion, realizing their incapacity for understanding, occupy other parts of the House until the bell swings them into a division.

On Monday the guillotine motion was proposed, closing a discussion after two days' debate on a Clause 1 which was practically withdrawn, and a substitute of Clause 1 which had not even been debated. Labour was wise to walk out of the House, as every minority will, I suppose, in

future walk out of the House when the bludgeon is substituted for reason. The only argument advanced by Mr. Baldwin, who seemed in better spirits than usual, was that he and his friends wanted to start their holidays at the beginning of August and that they could not do so if the Trade Unions Bill was adequately discussed. Perhaps another argument not brought forward was that the more it is discussed, the more the Government has to put down fresh amendments. In any case, the only alternatives to withdrawal from the debate were to plead pitifully for extension of a few more hours or days—an act of humiliation—or to create scenes in the House, which make neither for edification nor respect.

Labour members returned (and rightly) on Tuesday. A fresh litter of Government amendments (which will be discussed under the guillotine) were pitched upon the floor of the House. The unfortunate Douglas Hogg was kept busy with conundrums, in a debate which became a cross-examination: and in one place Mr. Thomas revealed that the layman can submit the lawyer to such an ordeal as efficiently as the lawyer the layman, with the result of extorting verbose, contradictory, and damaging explanations. Mr. Lloyd George succeeded in obtaining an opinion from the Attorney-General that what Sir W. Greaves-Lord had just declared would be unattacked by this Bill—the refusal to carry commodities such as “blackleg coal” in a purely industrial dispute—would as a matter of fact be illegal, if it inflicted hardship sufficient to frighten the Government into any interference in the dispute. The chaos increases with every closer examination. The sole prayer of the Government lawyers must be for the arrival of half-past ten and the enforcement of silence. Mr. Harry Gosling, making a welcome reappearance after prolonged illness, delivered a speech of such simple eloquence and appeal, cheered by all parties, as has rarely been heard in the House of Commons. But the mad work continues—with the “steamroller” rolling over the good and bad arguments alike, as if they had never been uttered at all.

## THE CONDITION OF THE BOOK TRADE

[Mr. Saxton, the Nottingham bookseller, continues our discussion in the following article.—ED., NATION.]

THE articles that have recently appeared in THE NATION have put the general conditions of the book trade very fairly. Of course, the references have been in general terms to the apathy of the general public and the reward of the author and the consideration of the question whether books are too dear. Perhaps a bookseller of fifty years' actual shop experience and still at work may contribute some practical considerations about the actual conditions of the trade.

All are greatly indebted to Mr. Keynes for his answer to the question “Are Books too Dear?” and for so convincingly proving that, with the conditions as they are, they are not too dear. The remedy is with the general public. If they will buy more steadily and regularly the books that are “worth while” the increased sales would soon be acknowledged by some reduction in price.

But who do buy books to-day? For it is quite certain that, in spite of what has been written, very many thousands of books are sold in Great Britain and Ireland during the year. And these are distributed by booksellers—large, middle or small sized shops—and with staffs and organizations to deal with them.

The answer is best put as a short classification:—

(a) Professors, Lecturers, Teachers at Universities, Colleges, the Public Schools, and kindred institutions. These buy for themselves and also for the Staff or Departmental Libraries.

(b) Municipal and Subscription Libraries. The first, of course, rate-supported; the second found in most towns throughout the country, old-established, yearly subscription plus original “share”; or represented again by Mechanics' Institute Libraries—catering very well (as a rule) for the members.

(c) The Student class, interpreted in a very wide sense—to include the thousands of working men and women who attend the classes organized by the Extra-Mural Tutorial Departments of our University Colleges, by the W.E.A., by the Trades Unions, and such like.

(d) A noteworthy class of books issued in recent years is the class dealing with Technics and Business. Akin to these are Law and Medicine. All these—Law, Medicine, and Technics—require special salesmanship—and certain firms do provide this, and the turnover must be considerable in total amount. Some fraction of the Technical book trade may be done by the country bookseller if he looks after it.

(e) There are also the public interested in Sport of all kinds—especially Hunting, Shooting, Fishing and Golf. Each sport has its followers and each its Library. The old “County” are large supporters of this class of book, as also the more prosperous “City men.”

(f) Another class—and may his tribe increase—is that that includes the genuine booklover with his real literary sense: who buys here and there as this or that appeals to him. A talk with him is a joy, and often he gives the bookseller as much as he gets in the exchange of opinions. This good man buys to read and possess his own copy and gradually to build up his own collection. He is the heart of bookselling.

There are nowadays many L.P. or limited editions issued—and these are bought by collectors, as distinct from readers; and into the purchase the element of a commercial speculation sometimes enters. This is a special trade for those who can do it.

(g) I have said nothing of a very large demand for Gift-Books—Christmas, Weddings, and other occasions. Christmas is the great Gift-Book time for all, from the children up—but many books are bought throughout the year for some friend or acquaintance.

(h) The last class of buyer I shall mention is the large class which buys the book on the topic of the day or that makes possible “a best-seller.” These do not buy books for the love of them and for the joy of possessing them. They buy because the topic interests, or because they hear one and another repeat, “Have you read —?” or “You must get and read —” until in response to such a social demand the individual buys it, reads it, and in his turn becomes an advertiser of the book. There is no help to the circulation of a book equal to this one. But you cannot buy it, nor organize it, nor foretell it!

Such an analysis of the buyers of books does not pretend to be scientific, nor correct, nor complete. It is the sort of answer any bookseller would give after five minutes' consideration. But it is a working analysis, necessary, I think, before you can profitably answer the question, “How may we sell more books?”

This is an important question and one that booksellers, as well as authors and publishers, wish to see practically answered.

No doubt general apathy is the great obstacle—the thousands do not care. The best of them are content to borrow from a Library, and for the rest their interest is in other things or subjects. We all hope for a real interest in books and literature in the generation now at school: children of parents who have known more education than their preceding generation, and children also who are entering into a more intelligent teaching of the great heritage of our English literature.

One acknowledges readily enough and would give it its full value in making any judgment—that men are not all gifted with this love of books and reading. They would rather drive a car, or play golf, or watch cricket, or read the financial column of the TIMES than settle down quietly with some reflective book. The question for publishers and booksellers to answer is “How big is this section of the general public?” and “How may we convert some of them so that some hours may be given each week to a good book?” Is conversion possible, or must we pay more attention to “intensive culture” so that two books shall be bought by the man who now buys one? I do not like that suggestion: it is too unkind.

In any attempt to increase the sale of good books, we must not forget that these have an individual appeal. If a



book deals with science or biography or modern drama, the bookseller must deal with the public he can reach; but no circularizing nor sales-letters nor cheapened price will sell the book on science to the man who is interested in modern drama. The two interests may and do exist in the same person, but not so often as to make it worth while to fly both arrows. I am presuming all through that the bookseller knows his customer and has common sense.

I have written nothing on the very large output from which a bookseller has to make his selection for his stock. It is a judgment requiring great experience and full knowledge of what his own customers are interested in. Often his judgment has to be made on the publishers' announcement only. But the remedy for over-supply (if it exists) is in the hands of the bookseller, and he need not order any book that he is doubtful about selling.

Another factor in bookselling is *locality*. A keen and intelligent man running a bookshop in a small country town cannot sell as many books as he might in a town like Leicester or Nottingham. Nor again can Leicester or Nottingham sell as many or as special books as Glasgow, Edinburgh or Manchester. This fact of locality ought to be remembered by those who criticize the bookshops, and be reckoned generally as an excuse for shortcomings. A real bookseller is often disheartened either by being obliged *not* to order some good book he much wished to, or because he cannot sell one that he has ventured to buy. Locality and tradition give Oxford and Cambridge a special appeal that no other city (except London, of course) can have. London is unique.

To sum up a rambling wordiness. The outlook is more hopeful than I have ever seen it. The two great Associations—the Publishers' and Booksellers'—are in close and most friendly relationship, which will have most beneficial results on the general welfare of the trade as a whole. "The man in the street" really is buying the many good books that are issued for his edification and amusement at 2s. to 3s. 6d. each; the daily newspaper is giving increasing space to "Notices" and "Gossip," and, of course, *THE NATION* and other serious weeklies make serious reviewing of the current notable books an important part of their contents, and are much appreciated. Then the service of *JOHN O' LONDON'S WEEKLY* and *T. P.'S WEEKLY* is very important to the book trade because it helps the average man to select and enjoy intelligently. The *TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT* has its own peculiar place, and I am glad it has reached its 30,000 mark. Besides "the idea of reading and bookbuying" is now being advertised in various ways (authors most willingly helping this on) and the National Book Council is overseeing this method of popular appeal.

Meanwhile, the bookseller meets most interesting people on the floor of his shop; he makes friends and pleasant, happy acquaintances, for his customers become such. He has always some new book to read or to become acquainted with, so his sense of surprise never dies—but new and old together make his delight, and not the least when Time's passing proves the newer book to be worthy of an equal place by the side of the tested old.

So may we booksellers flourish ever!

HENRY B. SAXTON.

## LIFE AND POLITICS

**T**HE chief need of the Labour Party at the moment is a Mr. Pringle. That redoubtable warrior made himself a terror to the Labour Government by inventing a special technique which had all the advantages of obstruction without coming within the Parliamentary ban. A Mr. Pringle is the creation of hard work, unsleeping watchfulness, and the skill to keep opponents guessing and on the jump all the time. The Labour Party is not only without a Mr. Pringle, but do not possess ordinary efficiency at the Parliamentary game. They have muffed one opening after another over the Trade Unions Bill. They have committed a series of childish blunders which led them finally

into the pettish demonstration of Monday. First they decided that they would take no part in the ordinary give-and-take between Opposition and Front Bench over the arrangement of business. This was simply playing into the hands of the Government tacticians. For, having given seventeen hours to Clause 1, with the sole result of passing the words "It is hereby declared that," the Government had a good case for arranging a time-table. Normally, of course, this would have been arranged by consultation "in the usual channels," but the Labour Party having sulked out of the game, the Government Whips had everything in their own hands. They did not tell the Labour Party anything about it, and announced the guillotine at their own convenience, so that the Opposition heard the news too late to do anything. Labour, of course, was furious, but nothing was left for them to do but to make the childish demonstration of walking out of the House, and coming back next day with their tails between their legs. The truth is that the Labour Party is seriously wanting in men who will take the trouble to put in the research and labour necessary to maintain an effective and continuous fight against a Bill bristling with technicalities like the Trade Unions Bill. The Liberals could do it, but their numbers are small and their opportunities restricted.

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The English goldbeaters who are trying to persuade a Merchandise Marks Committee to order foreign gold leaf to be stamped with its (German) place of origin are angry when anyone calls this a Protectionist attempt. If the device is not a form of protection, then the word is meaningless to me. The notion behind it is that if the importers are compelled to mark every leaf "Made in Germany," the industries concerned will be so patriotic as to refuse to buy it. The supporters of this kind of thing do not trouble to realize that the German gold leaf is largely used chiefly because it is specially suitable for certain trades—i.e., book-binding—owing to its being thinner than the excellent English product. I am told that 90 per cent. of the leaf used for gilding the titles and tops of books is German, for the reason given. The small English industry is suffering from depression caused by the decline in the use of the heavier gold leaf—or so the Safeguarding Committee thought which turned down the application some years ago. The never-buy-anything-foreign appeal is plausible, but really it will not work, and nothing will or ought to prevent people from buying cheaper and more suitable gold leaf from abroad, simply because another less suitable native product is in the market. Industry does not function in that manner.

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The English Press has been poorly served with news from China during the crisis. The snippety papers have no use for anything but snippety bits of melodrama chosen to illustrate the root idea that the Chinese are the foreign devils. The *TIMES*, of course, has a full and intelligent arrangement of events, coloured British, but not violently so, and the *TELEGRAPH* has had excellent articles. The *MANCHESTER GUARDIAN* sent Mr. Arthur Ransome to China, and his articles are, by the common consent of the unprejudiced, the best things available. I have received a reprint of some articles by a correspondent of the *AMERICAN NATION* which rank with Mr. Ransome's work in the determination to get behind the news to the source, a matter about which the Press, either English or American, rarely takes much trouble. Foreign affairs should be the most interesting branch of news, for they are less complex than domestic, and have the charm of remoteness. They are usually the dullest because the papers rely on the gobbets of information doled out by a few agencies. The *NEW YORK NATION* man, Mr. Lewis S. Gannett, gives in short compass an admirably vivid picture of the rising of "Young China":

what it is, what it wants, and how it is going to get it. He evidently does not admire very much what the British are doing in China—the later liberal developments of our Foreign Office do not seem to come into the story—but neither does he, nor his editor, admire the American attitude. Most of us in this country neither admire nor otherwise—we simply cannot understand what the American policy aims at.

Only one newspaper paid adequate attention to the extraordinarily courageous attack made the other day by Professor Vantyne on the fanatical patriots of his own country who pollute the fount of historical truth in the matter of the War of Independence—or the American Revolution as Americans often call it. Professor Vantyne was lecturing in London, a fact which will certainly add animus to the resentment of his enemies at home. When Englishmen deplore the workings of the American mass mind, let us remember with honour men like this outspoken Professor, to whom the truth is more than the applause of all the zealots and heresy hunters of his own land. His performance was a refreshing exhibition of hard-hitting. What infuriates him, and all serious American students, is the fact that the work of a generation of historians, in slowly clearing the story of the Revolution, as told in America, of its accretions of prejudice and distortion, should be endangered by a gigantic newspaper stunt, aiming at inflaming the popular mind against Great Britain. Listening to his brilliant lecture I wondered whether certain chapters of "Martin Chuzzlewit" are as out of date as is commonly supposed. The pity of it all is that our own English historians have long ago given up the attempt to defend the mistakes of Lord North and King George III. If we on this side have shown willingness to tell an impartial story, without glossing over our ancient blunders, surely even 101 per cent. Americans may allow American Professors to tell the truth where it tells against the Colonists? In any case, as Professor Vantyne remarked, the facts of history will not budge.

If, as someone said, the hoardings are the poor man's picture gallery, one must rejoice in the recent rise in the quality of the exhibits. I am glad that the Empire Marketing Board is spending that fraction of my money which helps to finance its artistic efforts with discretion. This propaganda of Empire goods leaves one somewhat cold, but political controversy is not the job of the poster critic, and in that capacity I must applaud the brightening of London by a Government Department. None of the Empire posters so far produced seem to me as good as the best of the pictures which save us from going mad with monotony in the porcelain passages Underground. It is something at any rate to have this spread of colour at street corners. I missed a 'bus in my suburb the other day owing to my admiration of the gorgeous scenery in which romantic ladies pick Ceylon tea, and the glowing splendour of the rice fields made me more than ever convinced that journalism is a drab trade. I am told that these posters can be bought now for a shilling each, and that thousands are being used to decorate schools all over the country. The poster collectors are after the originals. Mr. Gill's "Highways of Empire" remains up to date the most pleasing result of the Government's patronage of poster art. He has recaptured the fine careless rapture of the early mapmakers, who populated land and sea with quaint and impossible life. This map almost persuades me to travel Imperially—and yet I think it will be Italy this year.

I should like to offer my own small compliment to the French President in a form which no Provençal could fail to appreciate—a word of praise of his "home town." I spent

some happy days, not long ago, at Nîmes, which I assert to be one of the most endearing towns in France. More than any place I know even in Italy—I would not except Rome, extravagant as that sounds—does Nîmes recall the atmosphere of the old Latin civilization. At Nîmes the Roman survivals are, as it were, domesticated. The wine merchants do business in familiar nearness to the splendid amphitheatre, where on occasion the circus lions roar as if for a feast of Early Christians. The arena is also used for bull-fights, but as this is a complimentary note, I will say nothing about that. Hardly in Rome itself can you sit on the pavement in peace, drinking coffee, and admiring a Temple, the colour of old ivory, and so perfect that one cannot at first believe it is not copyists' work. The spring still pours out of the hill into the bath where the citizens of the capital of Roman Gaul solaced the ills and heats of life, and I remember climbing up that most dizzy stair in the huge funnel-shaped tower high on the hill, built of ancient rosy brick, which may be pre-Roman, so far as anyone knows. Among the citizens who take life not too strenuously in the pleasant town of Nîmes one meets many a smiling vivacious face such as has beamed on the London populace this week.

The news of Sir Sidney Colvin's death has been sending us back to the Vailima Letters and the poems which Stevenson sent to his friend from exile, especially the well-varnished lines beginning "I heard the pulse of the besieging sea." There have been few more notable friendships in literature than that between the wayward, entrancing R. L. S. and the staid and learned Colvin. Most people knew of Colvin only as Stevenson's friend. This was hardly just, for Colvin was a master among art experts, and a writer of great charm. His *Life of Keats* is the best thing on the subject. Stevenson, one thinks sometimes, absorbed an unfair share of adoration. Colvin, one feels sure, would have resented such a suspicion almost as a blasphemy. He was a sound and useful friend. I like his comment when Stevenson proposed to dedicate a collection of his books to him with the words, "Tibi, Palinurus"—"Not so much Palinurus as Polonius." I remember once hearing Colvin in a lecture relate how he came out into the street one day in 1894, and saw on a placard "Death of R. L. Stevenson." In a few quiet words he conveyed the shock of overwhelming loss. I suppose Sir Edmund Gosse is now the only survivor of the men who knew Stevenson in his early days—the wild unfledged Stevenson, who later spread his rather gaudy wings and flew southwards not to return. Sir Edmund Gosse has always mingled a pleasing tartness with his admirations.

KAPPA.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

\$4.80 AND 4s.

SIR,—I really must protest against having attributed to me views I have neither held nor expressed.

When I referred to income tax I meant a tax on income, and not on turnover or on anything else. My argument was not purely quantitative as you suggest; yet you isolated the quantitative element in it completely from the qualitative; and—fastening on the figures in the abstract—ignored the fact that I was comparing the withdrawal of a 10 per cent. export *bounty* with a 20 per cent. income *tax*. The consequent unfairness was none the less great because it was, as I fully realize, unintended. Certainly the quantitative element was important—but clearly it was the less important. The sole justification for having seized upon it alone, to the exclusion of all else, would have arisen only had I proceeded to argue on a purely arithmetical basis that the income tax in question was exactly *twice* as injurious to our



export trade as the withdrawal of the bounty. If I gave you reason to think I meant this to be inferred, of course I apologize.

To apprise the precise effect of the raised exchange on the exporting trades as a whole is not easy: that they may have suffered a slight set-back on balance I have never denied. Mainly in accordance with whether the raw material of the exporting industry has—or has not—been derived from abroad, each exporting trade has experienced the effects of the higher exchange in varying degree. On the one hand the cotton industry has, in the main, positively gained from it—on the other, mining has undoubtedly suffered substantial loss. But even here the loss has been appreciably less than the total amount of the withdrawn bounty; for the export bounty implied a corresponding import duty which sent up the cost of living all round.

On balance, therefore, and taking the export industries as a whole, my sole contention is that the beneficial effects of a bounty on exports, when resulting from a depreciated currency, are apt to be greatly exaggerated. Indeed, the case appears to me to be exactly parallel with that created by a Protective duty of which a depreciated currency is perhaps the most insidious form.

Hence, to clinch the matter and place my contention in a few words, I venture to assert that our export trades, taken as a whole (and you, sir, have taken them as a whole), would decidedly prefer relief from all income-tax demands to the doubtful benefits of a \$4.40 exchange. The mining industry is, I believe, almost the only one that might prefer the other alternative.

Your remarks on income tax raise the thorny problem of the true incidence of taxation—ever a debatable point, and never more so than when it is a question of the taxation of profits, on which you appear to adopt an almost more extreme view than Ricardo himself—certainly a more extreme one than Mill; but since the Ricardian contention that income tax will not raise prices depends upon the tax falling on *all* profits, I cannot see that it applies to our export trades which are competing with those of other countries not faced with such a tax.

Again, that "Income tax cannot possibly convert a profit into a loss" is, I think, true only if taken in its most literal sense. And, in any case, since all business is normally carried on solely with a view to making profits, I find it difficult to regard any tax that lops 20 per cent. off them as being a comparatively light burden on industry.—Yours, &c.,

GEORGE BRYANS.

Reform Club, Pall Mall, S.W.1.

May 16th, 1927.

## OUR MALTHUSIAN MIDDLE CLASSES

SIR,—Dr. Dunlop's letter raises three interesting points, but he fails to deal with the real difficulty stated in Miss Vera Brittain's article. To her suggestion that society to-day is breeding misgenetically, because the middle classes, most able to produce fit children, find the necessary resources for a young household in the hands of those past breeding age, he replies by a picture of society when in every civilized country it has become a rule that the couples in the poorest third of the population do not have more than one child. Such a rule, he contends, would obviate the danger of war, and would relax the economic pressure upon the middle classes, enabling their younger members to produce more children. But he ignores the difficulty that such a rule could only be upheld in a state of society so controlled and self-conscious that Miss Brittain's other hypotheses would no longer hold good. What she appears to seek is a remedy for existing evils, not a vision of a possible Utopia. We may, or we may not, come to practise such rigid limitation of families as Dr. Dunlop prophesies. It may, or it may not, be beneficial to the race to do so. But Miss Brittain spoke of the world as it exists to-day, with numbers of young professional married couples producing only one or two children, for lack of further income to provide adequate education; while their parents, often comfortably off, are benevolently setting aside the money needed now, as an agreeable legacy for their sons and daughters to inherit when the need for money is no longer urgent, and the prospect of an increased family has passed.

A far more hopeful development would appear to be in the rigorous exaction of death duties, whereby the State would make it more profitable for the older generation to give to their sons and daughters upon marriage the accumulated savings which will one day be theirs, rather than to wait until the hazard of death places the additional income in the hands of those who most need it.—Yours, &c.,

W. HOLBY.

Bainesse, Cottingham, E. Yorks.

May 13th, 1927.

SIR,—Regarding my letter in to-day's issue, you rightly ask if I have allowed for the facts that not all people marry, and that many married couples are involuntarily sterile. I answer, Yes. If every ten couples had twenty-six children, I reckon that twenty would replace the parents, and the remaining six be actually sufficient to replace the individuals who, by reason of death, celibacy, or sterility, do not reproduce themselves. I have read that the late Leroy Beaulieu quoted, in his warning book on depopulation, that in 1901-5 the average number of children per marriage in France was only 2.5. Its lowest birth-rate in these years was 20.5 per thousand; even if we take it as 19 in order certainly to omit illegitimate births, we still have the 2.5 average producing a birth-rate more than sufficient to maintain a population. Dr. Louis I. Dublin, also a deprecator of the falling birth-rate, indicated in his presidential address to the American Statistical Association in 1924 that unless the mortality and marital conditions in the U.S.A. still further improved (which they assuredly will) the average number of children required was 2.6 per couple, and 3.1 per fertile couple.—Yours, &c.,

B. DUNLOP, M.B.

May 14th, 1927.

## DIVORCE AND ANNULMENT

SIR,—I venture to ask if you will print this contribution to the discussion on the above subject. I think the essence of the matter is to be found in the Roman Catholic doctrine of "intention." According to Roman theology, matrimony is one of the seven sacraments. Now, to the validity of every sacrament it is necessary that the minister of such sacrament should have a "right intention." "The validity of a sacrament does so far depend upon the internal intention of the minister that if he were secretly to withhold it the sacramental act would be invalid; at least, this is the doctrine more commonly, and, as it seems to me, more correctly, taught by Catholic theologians" (Rev. S. F. Smith, S.J., "The Doctrine of Intention," page 7).

It will be noted that Father Smith implicitly admitted that the subject is involved in some doubt. As a matter of fact, the Roman theory of "intention" is a famous source of endless puzzlement, both in itself and in its results. To quote Addis and Arnold's "Catholic Dictionary" (edition 1917, pp. 745-6): "The Council of Trent (session 7, *De Sac.*, canon 11) requires us to believe that the minister of the sacraments must have 'the intention of doing that at least which the Church does.' This definition has been the occasion of much controversy within and without the Church. Protestants have attacked it as making the effect of the sacraments uncertain. Catholics have interpreted it variously." I think I may fairly say that as, in Roman theology, the validity of sacraments depends, *inter alia*, on "a right intention," and as that intention is a matter of so much doubt, the sacraments are correspondingly doubtful. The bearing of this on marriage is clear.

Matrimony is a sacrament. Its "ministers" are the two people who are being married (the minister of the sacrament of matrimony is *not* the priest; before the Trent Council, not even the *presence* of a priest was necessary). Well, if either or both the two people have not a true intention, the marriage is null and void *ab initio*. What, in matrimony, would "a wrong intention" be? Obviously, any resolve contrary to the nature of matrimony. The Roman Church says one of the essentials of the nature of matrimony is that it is indissoluble. If, then, one of, or both, the parties regard the ceremony as not to be indissoluble, the intention is bad, and the whole thing is nothing. There are many other ways in which the intention can be bad; but that one example will suffice here.

What conclusions emerge? What but these?—(1) It is a fallacy to confuse divorce (dissolving a real marriage) with annulment (declaring there never was a marriage in the case); (2) the whole basis of marriage in the Roman Church is full of doubt; and (3) this "intention" theory is a possible or probable means of endless "subtle contrivance." I think the last two of these three considerations are overlooked by Mr. Belloc, and many other Catholic writers, when they become indignant at non-Catholic criticisms of the Roman theory and practice as to matrimony.—Yours, &c., J. M. POYNTER.

Highbury, N.5.

May 14th, 1927.

### "THE FIRST AND THE LAST"

SIR,—Your contributor in reviewing this little play is kind enough to observe, with that air of infallibility which is so engaging an attribute of some of your young men, that "Mr. Galsworthy can frequently be one of the worst writers that have ever been taken seriously, without apparently any sense of form, powers of expression, or feeling for beauty, without that is to say, any of the qualities that make up an artist."

Now I happen to have seen this little play which is adapted from what has always seemed to me to be one of the most moving and intensely interesting stories that Mr. Galsworthy has written. It is, I confess, a poor adaptation and it fails to convey much of the tragic insight manifested in the story. But with the recollection of the story in one's mind it is revolting to read the facile condemnation of a great writer which your contributor has thought fit to pronounce. The story seems to me to be a moving application of the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican. The writer shows the power, respectability, and strength of the Pharisee and also his fundamental inferiority to the Publican. If your contributor can be "on the side of the lawyer" after reading the story I can only offer him my disrespectful condolence.—Yours, &c., C. W.

### LAND BIRDS THAT SWIM

SIR,—Mr. Morys Gascoyen, in his article "A Rabbit on Trek," in your issue of May 7th, mentions non-aquatic birds as being unable to swim. Perhaps, therefore, the following

extract from a book of mine, summarizing the facts of the case, may be of interest in this connection:—

"Land-birds can generally swim if they are put to it, those which run swimming with their legs—I have seen a young peacock thus save himself; those which rely on their wings will flap themselves ashore, which I have seen a swallow do after it had fallen in; but they soon become draggled and exhausted, and except for the large flightless runners, cannot go any distance, in spite of being unable to sink. The giant runners, however, are as strong swimmers as beasts. I have known of a cassowary making land after a four miles' swim in a by no means calm sea."

"Bird Behaviour," p. 18.

—Yours, &c.,

May 11th, 1927.

F. FINN.

### FLYING SHIPS

SIR,—I was much interested in Major Oliver Stewart's article in your issue of the 14th.

Quite apart from the fact that two-thirds of our future Imperial air routes to South Africa and Australia are over water—either sea or chains of lakes and rivers—it has always seemed to me obvious that our island position necessarily entails that the most important type of aircraft from our point of view is the seaplane. And yet hitherto the aeroplane has been developed here to the almost total exclusion of the seaplane, which has been, if possible, even more neglected than the airship. While I am a convinced believer in the future of the airship, I am equally clear that the aeroplane must eventually yield place to the seaplane for serious commercial aviation.

I am sure that Major Stewart is right in holding the view that the seaplane is more capable of development in large sizes than the aeroplane; both because the size of the latter is necessarily limited by the surface and area of land-aerodromes and because it must be more economical of weight to house passengers in a hull, which constitutes the under-carriage of a seaplane, than in a separate structure, as must necessarily be the case in an aeroplane. I believe, in fact, that the seaplane begins to come in as an economical proposition where the aeroplane leaves off, owing to its becoming too heavy and unwieldy to be managed on the ground.—Yours, &c.,

W. LOCKWOOD MARSH.

United University Club, Suffolk Street, S.W.1.

## THE DECAY IN THE FINE ARTS OF POLITICAL ABUSE

By WINIFRED HOLTBY.

WE are by no means yet alive to all the issues raised by the Trade Unions Bill. Little attention has been paid to one most significant, perhaps the most significant, feature of the whole regrettable affair, the incontrovertible evidence which it has offered us of the decline in the fine arts of political abuse.

Our Legislature has been engaged upon the consideration of prohibiting by statute the utterance of expressions of ridicule or contempt during industrial disputes. Our system of parliamentary procedure has limited, during the most acrimonious discussions, the range and detail of the Opposition speeches. The Laws of Libel have rendered almost innocuous the eloquence of our political platforms and the vituperation of our Press. Yet all these tedious precautions do no more than lock the stable door after the horse has gone. The truth is that we have lost the rich amplitude of imaginative insult which once lent splendour to political antagonism, and we cover the poverty of our invention and the lassitude of our wrath by the thin cloak of legal prohibition.

The interruptions which peppered the Government speeches during the first days of the debate on second reading, were at best like the "small curses upon great occasions," which Tristram Shandy's Uncle Toby compared to

sparrow shot fired against a bastion. "They serve, continued my father, to stir the humours but carry off none of the acrimony." Yet true invective, like true satire, according to our more learned modern critics, "God be praised, is a purge, and a healthy man takes to it as naturally as a dog to grass, for the release of his humours." Such a purge organised interruption may never be. The glee with which Labour papers fastened upon the ambiguous substitution for the prohibited Blackleg, "Call him a Douglas Hogg," betrays the dreariness of the average sally.

It might be thought that the ritual of parliamentary debate stifled the ardours of antagonism, did modern correspondence glow with the vehemence which once almost set on fire the parchment passing from Guelph to Ghibelline. It took M. Huillard Bréholles devoted years of industrious labour and indefatigable learning to edit the letters written by Frederick II. to his papal antagonists, and the yet more formidable letters written by the Popes to Frederick. So fertile in opprobrium was the Emperor, that rumour circulated of his having sold his soul to the devil, the Father of Curses, and as for Gregory IX., being already invested with the powers of anathema, his mildest wish was that poor Frederick's soul might stink in Hell. In moments of less reticence, he damned him after the fashion of the Bishop



Ernulphus, in eating, drinking, sleeping, blood-letting, and in the performance of other corporeal activities not to be specified in this journal; he pursued him from Sicily to Naples, from Naples to Germany, from Germany to the Holy Land, and from thence to Hell with his denunciation, until Dante took all that was left of the once great emperor, and placed him in the Inferno among the Schismatics.

To-day we have nothing at all to equal this. The world of literature offers an occasional echo of the ancient splendour, as in Mr. Belloc's letter to the detested Don, who dared to have a difference of opinion with Mr. Chesterton. But then Mr. Belloc may share a little of the rich ecclesiastical tradition of Pope Gregory. In politics, however, we search in vain for fine abuse. Red Letters may be scarlet in their implication, but their language is as pale as milk.

Few signs of the heavy change are more unfortunate than the deterioration of the political song. The best effort, apparently, of the Primrose League, is to refrain from omitting,

"Confound their politics,  
Frustrate their knavish tricks."

When the present member for South-West Bethnal Green won his seat for the Liberal Party in 1922, small boys paraded the streets bearing his portrait, and chanting:—

"Vote, vote, vote for Percy Harris,  
Knock old Joey down the stairs,  
In his little top hat and he's very fond of fat  
And he won't go voting any more."

"Joey," being a Communist, did not wear a top hat; he also showed no signs of corpulence, and the constituents of Bethnal Green had no reason to criticize his palate. Probably the song was a nonsensical corruption of some ballad which may once have shown a sign of life—more life, at least one hopes, than those sad ghosts of song mercilessly disinterred by the Resurrection Men of the "Hands Off Britain Movement," from the Socialist Sunday Schools, where they well might have lain buried in decent obscurity. More pitiable travesties could hardly have been found among a nation which in the seventeenth century inspired Butler's spirited picture of sectarian fervour:—

"The oyster women locked their fish up  
And trudged away to cry "No Bishop."  
The mouse-trap men laid savealls by  
And 'gainst evil counsellors did cry.  
Botchers laid old clothes in the furch  
And fell to turn and patch the church.  
And some for Brooms, Old Boots and Shoes  
Bawled out to purge the Common House."

Their bawling provided, it is said, a model for Phineas Fletcher, whose bowdlerized version speaks well for the original:—

"Of men, nay, Beasts; worse, Monsters; worst of all  
Incarnate Fiends, English Italianate,  
Of priests, O no, Masse Priests, priests cannibal,  
Who make their Maker, chew, grinde, feede, grow fat  
With flesh divine. . . ."

What has the Revised Prayer Book inspired comparable to that? Yet the subject was not dissimilar. Did a single oyster woman leave Scotts to cry "No Bishop?" A shout or two in the Albert Hall and an irreverent injunction to the Primate were the best that our degenerate age could do with a situation which once might have provided songs from Winchelsea to Whitby.

"Our armies swore terribly in Flanders," said Uncle Toby. And so did ours, but their excellence was of emphasis rather than of ingenuity, and those who returned have not bequeathed their acquired characteristics to their sons in the political battlefield. But of course, even Mr. Huxley has not yet assured us that acquired characteristics are hereditary. Yet in Wright's notable collection of

"Political Songs and Ballads," we may read what fertility of abuse our fathers enjoyed, though little that he offers us surpasses that song which blossomed from the bitter root of the Hundred Years' War, and was recorded for our edification in 1346:—

"Francia, foeminea, pharisea, vigoris idea,  
Lynxia, viperea, vulpina, lupina, Medea,  
Elphas in monte pugnaris cum rhinoceronte,  
Cor gerit in fronte, cor habes cum camelionte. . . ."

The delicious Latin needs no translation. The entire song deserves to be repeated, were it only for the monstrous insult lurking in that apparently harmless "cor." "'Tis true," as Mr. Shandy said, "there was something of hardness in his manner—and as in Michael Angelo, a want of grace—but then there is such a greatness of gusto."

Our greatness of gusto has departed, driven away by the two characteristics of our modern politics, the substitution of economic for religious fanaticism, and the development of the machinery of party government. Mr. Robert Graves, commenting upon the decline of Swearing and Improper Language, observed that this art "Probably reached its high-water mark in the late eighteenth century," and declined after an Age of Reason which took the sting out of the tail of anathemas. It is the same with personal abuse. Whereas once we could pursue a man from this world to the next with our spleen, to-day we must confine ourselves to one limited life, wherein the evils which we may wish for him are as nothing to those which might have awaited him in a suitably equipped and moderated Hell, nor are the defamations with which we may insult his character in any way comparable to the magnificent virulence with which we could defile his soul.

But further, we have polluted the pure springs of political hatred by the mechanical necessities of our party system. Being organized, as Lord Balfour once told us, in order that we may quarrel, we find ourselves bidden to love and hate at a command, and lose the spontaneous emotion which bred that lyric hate, half devil and half bird, whose songs once carolled our immortal enmities.

We now have no remedy and little hope, and when we desire to utter adequate invective, we can only turn with wan vehemence to the invocation of the poet Heine:—

"And thou, sweet Satire, daughter of the great  
Themis and goat-footed Pan, lend me thy aid. Thou art  
on thy mother's side sprung from the race of Titans,  
and thou dost hate, even as I, the enemies of thy kindred,  
the weakling usurpers of Olympus. Lend me thy  
mother's sword that I may slay them, the detested  
brood, and give me the reed pipes of thy father that I  
may pipe them down to death."

And then, perhaps, we remember how charmingly Mr. Baldwin loves his pigs, and how admirably he commends the classics, and we have no heart, even with the companionship of goat-footed Pan, to pipe him, or anybody else indeed, down to death.

## THE DRAMA EDGAR WALLACE

Savoy Theatre: "Double Dan." By EDGAR WALLACE.  
Lyceum Theatre: "The Terror." By EDGAR WALLACE.

FOR a quarter of a century Edgar Wallace has been a very famous man, but, quite recently, he has become even more famous than he was before. As autobiographer, novelist, tipster, dramatic critic, and playwright, he is always with us; he is a twentieth-century encyclopædist.

Unfortunately, I know very little about the works of Edgar Wallace; in fact my information is limited to three

plays; nor do I think I should greatly enjoy the process of studying his complete works, as he does not happen to write the sort of thing I care about. Nevertheless, he is a significant writer, one of the most significant writers of our day, if the term "writer" can be applied to one who has practically abolished writing.

His two plays "Double Dan" and "The Terror" are of very varying importance, and "The Terror" is very much the better, and yet they are of a piece. "Double Dan" is frankly too frivolous. It is a parody, and Mr. Wallace has not enough wit or literary gift to pull a parody through, and this failing has caused "Double Dan" to be even too severely judged. For it is in many ways very ingenious, and cunningly worked out; the curtains and many of the situations "tell." The real Edgar Wallace is in "Double Dan" but working under difficulties.

"The Terror" is on the whole a success, though the plot seemed to me to break down badly in the penultimate and crucial stage. I still do not understand it. But let this pass. It is a thoroughly good melodrama, with an adequate supply of sham detective work. Still it is a melodrama, not a detective play. But when we compare it, say, to "The Silver King," we shall note a great difference. There is no appeal to the finer feelings, no grip on one's heart strings, no thought of ultimate morality. The small love interest is emotionally negligible. So all use for the spoken word has gone. The play is written round a few stage properties, amid which the protagonists gesticulate with a minimum of necessary speech. At intervals our attention will be gripped by a sensational incident. In fact the cinema has intervened. One might almost picture Mr. Edgar Wallace dashing off a "scenario," and then handing it over to the office boy to fill in the captions. These captions were, I suppose, adequate, as the infantile humour seemed good enough to amuse an unsophisticated audience, so it is no use the highbrow murmuring, "We are not amused." In any case, Mr. Edgar Wallace evidently does not think it worth while wasting time on dialogue, which shows his remoteness from the authors of "East Lynne" and "The Silver King." "The play's the thing" with Mr. Wallace, and the tables have now been turned. For a long time the cinema ineptly imitated the theatre. The theatre now pants after the film. And Mr. Wallace is the leader of the movement. Unfortunately Mr. Wallace apparently despises not only literature, but also production. I have never seen a play of his well produced. "The Terror" has none of the slick efficiency of a good film. A little more attention to this important matter would, I think, work wonders with Mr. Wallace, and reveal him as an original playwright, though a playwright of the decadence, a playwright in a cul-de-sac. For can the films teach anything to the theatre? Can a play be built round a motor-car or a screen or a French window like a film? I think it is doubtful if such a play can ever be really interesting, and that childish as it was, ludicrous as now its sentiment appears, "The Silver King" was of a higher order of achievement than "The Terror." Still, in his lack of all intellectual content, all sense of morality, all appeal to sentiment, in his concentration on incident, and in his caption-talk, Mr. Edgar Wallace is what is known as "contemporary."

FRANCIS BIRRELL.

## PLAYS AND PICTURES

THE production of Flecker's "Don Juan" at the Festival Theatre, Cambridge, suffered, on the first night at any rate, from under-rehearsal and weak production: Mr. Frank Birch, usually so capable, did not seem to be at home on the broad and shallow stage of this theatre. Taking the play in itself, two things were clearly proved: first, that it is an acting play, a fact which from reading it one is inclined to doubt; second, that if Flecker had lived to revise it, it would have been a triumph. As it stands, it is a superb piece of serious writing by a man with his tongue in his cheek, and as such it both baffled and embarrassed Cambridge audiences. Of course, it lacks unity, and

is marred by melodramatic errors—such as "Wait till the stars grow big"; yet the amazing congruity of the lyrics, the conviction of the rhymed couplets, and the almost uncanny dramatic sense which pervades the play make one feel that Flecker would have had a revolutionary and powerful influence on contemporary drama. Mr. Maurice Evans was adequate as Don Juan, if a little too suave at times, but Mr. Francis Waddell failed entirely to make Owen Jones a significant figure. The honours really go to Miss Phyllis Carleton for her impeccable rendering of the part of Lady Anne.

The film version of Tolstoy's "Resurrection," which is being shown at the New Gallery Cinema, has been made with considerably greater intelligence and taste than one would have expected from Hollywood, and has, moreover, kept tolerably near to the original. The love interest has, of course, been made the most of, and has been to a certain extent sentimentalized in that the social gulf between Prince Nekhludov and the peasant girl Katusha whom he seduces has been left rather vague, and the seduction itself is less callous than Tolstoy intended, but the conventional happy ending with the lovers in each other's arms has been avoided. The production, in which Count Ilya Tolstoy assisted, is excellent, especially the scenes in the prison and the pictures of the convicts on the march to Siberia, some of which are really moving. Mr. Rod la Rocque takes the part of Prince Nekhludov: he is always an attractive actor and is excellent in this film in a part which demands restraint and intelligence. Miss Dolores del Rio as Katusha acts well and looks extremely charming, but unlike most film stars does not mind, in the prison scenes for instance, altering her appearance realistically—and with considerable success—to suit the depths of misery and depravity to which she has then sunk.

Mrs. Winifred Bennett's paintings of Greece, of which there is an exhibition at the Brook Street Galleries, may be divided into two categories—those which she painted because she enjoyed painting them, and those which she painted because she felt she ought to paint them. Almost all the pictures are landscapes: the first category includes small unpretentious subjects, a street, a group of trees, a stretch of beach; the second, Greek temples and ruins, sunsets, Mount Hymettus, the Acropolis or a shepherd's wedding—all the conventional subjects of the old-fashioned artist who visits Greece; and Mrs. Bennett is not a great enough painter to make them artistically interesting. They remain illustrations, souvenirs of picturesque scenes and places. Her best work is in the first category, and some of her smaller landscapes have a certain charm. Her painting is never very original, but she has a sound technique, and her colour is sometimes good. There are two other interesting exhibitions at present being held—Modern French Prints, including engravings, etchings, lithographs, and woodcuts, chiefly by living artists, at the Victoria and Albert Museum, and seventeenth- and eighteenth-century English Mezzotint Portraits at Messrs. Agnew's gallery, 43, Old Bond Street.

Things to see and hear in the coming week:—

Saturday, May 21st.—

The Third Annual Cover Show, at the Central Library, Walthamstow, 3.

Irene Scharrer, Pianoforte Recital, Wigmore Hall, 8.

Mr. Eden Phillpotts's play, "The Carrier Pigeon," broadcast from Birmingham.

Sunday, May 22nd.—

The Rev. A. A. Green on "The Jew of To-Day," at South Place, 11.

Mr. J. T. Grein on "Current Comments on Passing Events, In the Theatre," Indian Students' Union, 5.

Three Hundred Club performance of Mr. D. H. Lawrence's "David," at the Regent Theatre, 7.30.

The Jewish Drama League in "Come to meet the Bride," at the Strand Theatre.

London Chamber Music Society Concert, Rudolf Steiner Hall, 8.30.



**Monday, May 23rd.—**

Dr. Charles Singer on "The Mediæval Aristotle,"  
University of London Club, 8.

Mr. Granville Barker's translation of Jules Romains' "Doctor Knock," at the Maddermarket Theatre, Norwich (May 23rd-28th).

The Dublin Singers, Æolian Hall, 8.

**Tuesday, May 24th.—**

The Bach Choir, Queen's Hall, 8.

The International Theatre's production of M. Emile Cammaerts' "The Mistress of The Beeches," at the Rudolf Steiner Theatre (May 24th-28th).

**Wednesday, May 25th.—**

Mathilde Verne, Pianoforte Recital, Wigmore Hall, 8.  
Canon E. S. Woods and Canon V. F. Storr on "The New Prayer Book," at King's College, 5.80.

**Thursday, May 26th.—**

Sir Flinders Petrie on "Recent Discoveries in Palestine: The City of Gerar," University College, 2.30.

Mr. Ernest Toller lecturing and reading at the Poetry Bookshop, 8.80.

Dean Inge on "The Philosophy of Religion," Royal Society of Arts, 5.45.

Mr. Lew Leslie's "Whitebirds," at His Majesty's.

**Friday, May 27th.—**

Frank Mannheimer, Pianoforte Recital, Wigmore Hall, 8.80.

OMICRON.

**THE LAKE BY MOONLIGHT**

"COME," he said, "for the moon's awake,  
To the mossed path beside the lake.  
We will trail our shadows on a ground  
That chilly ghostliness has drowned.

"Waves are not dark; they have a sheen.  
The trees are white-haired, which were green.  
Haunted the road we two shall pass.  
And fields around grow moonlight grass.

"So come," he said, "by the wide lake.  
In a silver sleeping world awake,  
We'll raise our eyes; alone we'll see  
The moon-made, oldest mystery.

"Take it into your head to go."

"If to be strange and silvered—no.  
Draw the curtains against the moon,"  
Answered the king. "Strike up a tune

"My friends can sing to by the fire,  
Fair hair and dark hair, by the fire.  
The laughing young ones sway my thought  
That they are near; the moon is not.

"And if to love my mind gives way,  
How loving-wise and kind are they;  
But a white-bearded cynic, he:  
I think the moon's too old for me."

GEORGE BUCHANAN.

**THEATRES.**

**ALDWYCH.** Gerrard 3929. NIGHTLY, at 8.15.  
MATINEES, WEDNESDAY & FRIDAY, at 2.30.

**ROOKERY NOOK.**

TOM WALLS, Mary Brough, and RALPH LYNN.

**AMBASSADORS.** NIGHTLY, 8.40. MATS., TUES., FRI., 2.30.

**"THE TRANSIT OF VENUS."**

By H. M. HARWOOD. (Ger. 4460.)

**CRITERION.** (Ger. 3844.) NIGHTLY, 8.40. MATS., TUES., SAT., 2.30.

**MARIE TEMPEST in  
THE MARQUISE,**

A NEW COMEDY BY NOEL COWARD.

**DRURY LANE.** EVGS., 8.15. MATS., WED. and SAT., at 2.30.

**"THE DESERT SONG," A New Musical Play.**

HARRY WELCHMAN. EDITH DAY. GENE GERRARD

**DUKE OF YORK'S.** Gerrard 0313

Nightly at 8.30. Mats., Thurs. and Sat., at 2.30.

**"ASLEEP,"**

By CYRIL CAMPION.

(Author of "Ask Beccles" and "The Lash.")

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## THE WORLD OF BOOKS

EDMUND BURKE

BURKE was bound sooner or later to attract one of the school of the younger biographers. The field is almost virgin, for, though he has received a glance and a chapter from Mr. Guedalla, nothing serious in the shape of a full-length study or biography has come his way for many years. Mr. Bertram Newman, who made something of a hit with his "Cardinal Newman," is the lucky man, and he now gives us "Edmund Burke" (Bell, 7s. 6d.). It is a book of considerable merits: well written, well informed, sober, judicious, it is a readable and serious attempt to make us see Burke a solid figure in the life that he lived, the thoughts that he thought, and the books that he spoke or wrote. Mr. Newman has had no easy task. Any competent young man should be able successfully to pin Burke down, like some large moth on a setting board, by means of an epigram, paradox, and simile. But to revitalize for this generation the Burke of the House of Commons and of that colossal extravaganza, the Hastings trial, and of "the Club" and of the home in Beaconsfield; to pursue the phantom of his political thought and statesmanship through the eight volumes of his "Works," the four volumes of his "Speeches," the six volumes of his "Letters," to make his statesmanship and political doctrine something substantial and understandable for the ordinary reader, to explain their origin and appraise their effect—this is a task which must present peculiar difficulties even to the most modern school of biography.

\* \* \*

That Mr. Newman should succeed completely in this task was hardly to be expected, but he has made his attempt with modesty and decency, and in making it has produced a book of value and interest. The peculiar difficulty of a biographer of Burke is shown by the fact that in his last pages Mr. Newman is compelled to acknowledge the extremely paradoxical appearance of Burke's career when observed panoramically from the vantage ground of posterity. I suspect biographers who find at the end of their books that the lives of their biographees are paradoxes, for it nearly always means that their interpretation and understanding of character is at fault or incomplete. In the eye of God no man's life, I imagine, is paradoxical, for it is the result of the interaction of his character and his environment, and perfect knowledge of both leaves no room for paradox. The successful biographer must have something of this omniscience and complete understanding, which Christians, not without trepidation, expect to find in the Judge on the Last Day, and the end of a biography should resemble a Divine Judgment in austerity and inevitability.

\* \* \*

So Mr. Newman finds the paradox in Burke's career, I suspect, only because, with all his knowledge and understanding, he has not worked through to the real and the complete Burke. It is even possible for one with far less knowledge of Burke than has Mr. Newman to suggest the point in which Mr. Newman's interpretation goes wrong. Mr. Newman states what he conceives to be the paradox of Burke's career as follows: "We see an almost unexampled combination of powers dedicated, not to preparing the way along which England and France were to travel during the century succeeding his death, but to supporting a political

and social order which, even before his own eyes, was beginning to pass away." The first thing to remark is that the paradox only exists if one accepts Mr. Newman's estimate of Burke's "combination of powers." I do not agree with him that Burke's combination of powers was unexampled. There was a man who lived some 1,800 years before Burke, Marcus Tullius Cicero, who, allowing for the inevitable differences of time and environment, seems to me to display the same combination of powers as Edmund Burke, and it is significant that the words which Mr. Newman applies to Burke's career can be applied almost word for word to Cicero's career, his powers were "dedicated, not to preparing the way along which Rome was to travel during the century succeeding his death, but to supporting a political and social order which, even before his own eyes, was passing away."

\* \* \*

It is ordinarily assumed that Burke was not only a great writer and orator, but a profound political thinker and a great statesman; and it is only if this assumption be made that his career is paradoxical. The truth, as it seems to me, is quite different. Burke, like Cicero, was a great orator, and a very great oratorical writer. They both had an astonishing and exuberant gift for the spoken and written word. The fecundity and brilliance of Burke's thought, imagination, and expression are immense, and it is impossible not to be dazzled by them. But in the eye of God, which is clear and never dazzled, Burke's thought is, I am sure, literary and never profoundly philosophical. It is brilliant thought, interesting thought; it may even, from time to time, strike out profound truths, but these truths fly from him like sparks from steel, they are not the truths of a profound thinker. If Burke's theoretical political thought is not that of a profound philosopher, but of a great writer or speaker of literature, his practical politics were certainly not those of a great statesman, unless indeed immovable conservatism is statesmanship. He may not have held that everything was for the best in the best of all possible worlds, but he did hold that if anything were changed everything would become worse. Upon this crude and desperate conservatism he spent his splendid imaginative and literary powers. Like all great Conservatives, his opposition to change was rooted in fear of change rather than in reason or statesmanship. This fear often quickened and sharpened his vision, and as in a nightmare he saw aspects of, say, the French Revolution with greater vividness and intensity than any of his contemporaries. But these visions and his conservatism and his politics were those of a literary genius, not of a statesman. On this view, it is no paradox that Burke never held a responsible office; that his political career was a long succession of failures; that he was a political Don Quixote; that he misjudged the characters of individuals and the feelings of the masses; that he never saw what was living and growing before his eyes, while he poured incense on the dead and rotten; that he pitied the plumage but forgot the dying bird. The right judgment on Burke can be given in the words of Cæsar who, when his boy was frightened at being discovered reading one of Cicero's books, took it from him and, after reading it for a long time, handed it back with the words: "This was a great orator, my child, a great orator and one who loved his country."

LEONARD WOOLF.



## REVIEWS

## ISRAFEL

**Israfel: the Life and Times of Edgar Allan Poe.** By HERVEY ALLEN. Two vols. (Brentano. £2 2s.)

**Poems and Miscellanies of Edgar Allan Poe.** Edited by R. BRIMLEY JOHNSON. **Tales of Mystery.** By EDGAR ALLAN POE. (Oxford University Press. 3s. 6d. each.)

MR. HERVEY ALLEN has written two large volumes, with many footnotes, illustrations, and appendices. I have not read two or three recent books on Poe—including one by Joseph Wood Kruttsch—but it is hardly possible that any of them contains more facts than this book. No fact about a man like Poe is wholly negligible; and Mr. Allen appears to have found a number of new ones: he is an authority on Poe's brother Henry, and he has digested the Ellis and Allan papers, and he reprints the wills of William Galt and John Allan. All this matter is worth preserving; but Mr. Allen does not make it easy for the reader to sort out the important from the less important. What is less pardonable, though not infrequent with enthusiastic biographers who are steeped in their subject, is that we find it difficult to detach the information from what may be called, euphemistically, the reconstruction. Here is a paragraph describing the first meeting of Poe, as a small boy, with the lady addressed in the poem "To Helen":—

"Mrs. Stanard was in one of the front rooms standing by a window niche. The light falling upon her, caught in her dark ringlets crossed by a white snood, glowed in the classic folds of her gown, and flowed about her slenderly graceful figure. Her face, the lineaments of which were turned towards Poe, was tinted by the gold of leaf-filtered sunshine. To the astonished boy her very being and body seemed to radiate light. 'This is Edgar Poe, mother,' said little Robert. 'This is "Helen," Edgar,' said a voice in the boy's soul, 'in her behold the comfort of great beauty.' On the bewildered ears of the young poet fell the sweet voice of Mrs. Stanard thanking him for his kindness to her little son and bidding him a welcome with gracious words to her house."

When we are tired or inattentive, it is easy to swallow this sort of stuff whole, especially if, as often in this book, it is interpolated in the midst of minute facts (we are presently told that the Stanard house had a portico and marble stoop with brass rails in front, p. 107, vol. I.). But if we are wakeful and critical, we begin to look for references. For the paragraph above we find a footnote:—

"There is, of course, no precise contemporary account of the actual scene of this meeting. I am giving the descriptions from a knowledge of the house and descriptions (italics mine) of a portrait of Jane Stith Stanard. The poem 'To Helen' seems to be the first-hand impression of a beloved person bathed in and radiating light."

This is creative biography. It is a pity. For there is some good criticism in the book, and much material for the critic; it is a book which anyone who wants to write about Poe ought to read. Not the least useful part of the book is the illustrations—not only the fine portrait, looking like Baudelaire and Buffalo Bill, with a touch of Elijah Pogram, which serves as frontispiece to Volume II., but innumerable views and illustrations of the epoch, which really contribute to make more actual that remote and forgotten society in which Poe lived.

There are matters on which, with all the information given, one still feels wholly in the dark. We leave unpenetrated the mystery of that strange and powerful personality, Mrs. Clemm, and the truth of that strange marriage. On the other hand, we know, if we did not know before, that Poe knew a good deal about opium, and also that he was no drunkard. A man with so weak a head and so delicate a nervous system, living in the world in which Poe lived, could hardly be called a "confirmed" drunkard with less reason; he could be called, at most, an accidental drunkard. Certain errors of this type are rectified, and perhaps more will be rectified in time; but the rectification is only necessary because too much importance has been attached to them in the past. In the end, Poe remains inscrutable. But there is a great deal of matter in this book which is necessary to anyone who would criticize Poe; we wish that

Mr. Allen would condense this necessary information into a second edition of one volume.

One of the most useful ways in which this book can assist literary criticism, is its emphasis upon the romantic origins of Poe. Poe was the direct heir of Byron, influenced a little by some of Byron's contemporaries. In following Byron, he was following the great tradition of English poetry in its romantic phase. The romantic phase was an essential phase, not only in England but for the whole of Europe. After the death of Byron it may be said that romanticism became diffused. Two men, and perhaps two men only, inherited the spirit of English romanticism: Poe and Heine. I should add Baudelaire, but Baudelaire is already influenced by Poe—although it is impossible to decide, especially after noticing the resemblance between the portraits of the two men, how much is influence and how much simple kinship. In England the romantic cult was transformed by the enormous prestige of Tennyson; in America by Tennyson also and later by Whitman, the American Tennyson; in France by Victor Hugo and his contemporaries. But the true inheritors of the spirit of romanticism expressed by Byron (and spirit here implies spirituality) were Poe and Heine and Baudelaire. That is why these three poets are more modern to-day than any of their contemporaries: in preserving the spirit of romanticism they preserve the absolute spirit; they provide the explanation of romanticism and open the way to something else.

There is another respect in which Mr. Allen's book ought to help the reputation of Poe. It concerns Poe's critical writings. Poe was not only an heroically courageous critic—the element of malice and irritability subtracted, there remains a large part of his criticism which must be applauded for pure pluck—but a critic of the first rank. The men whom he attacked are utterly insignificant. No one can realize how insignificant they are who has not read some of their works, such as the emasculated pastiche of "Don Juan" produced by Rufus Dawes. Poe not only performed a service to literature in America by exterminating these pests, but incidentally wrote some masterly criticism. A selection of his reviews ought to be published. The Oxford Press have just published the "Tales of Mystery," and the poems, together with the three essays on Poetry, edited by R. Brimley Johnson. They would do well to add a third volume of his critical writings.

T. S. ELIOT.

## MODERN DEVELOPMENTS OF CITY GOVERNMENT

**The Modern Development of City Government.** By E. S. GRIFFITH. Two vols. (Oxford University Press. £2 2s.)

It is generally believed in this country that local government is carried on pretty well here; that there may be something to learn from Germany about town-planning and the burgomaster system; but that America has no lesson for us except how to avoid the contempt and corruption into which her city government has fallen.

Mr. Griffith, who has studied the problem here and in the United States has an astonishingly different story to tell. He holds that in England the electorate is increasingly apathetic, and interested solely in the reduction of rates, that the personnel of our local authorities is deteriorating, that in place of the self-confidence and initiative of the last generation, our local authorities nowadays protest against any new duties which the Government lays upon them, and go whining to the Treasury for increased grants-in-aid, in spite of the increased central control which follows automatically.

In sharp contrast, he pictures a civic renaissance in the United States, keen local patriotism among the electorate; and an immense amount of experimental work: the strong mayor, the commission system, the city manager are great movements tending to concentrate responsibility and to make for efficiency. Owing to the fact that city constitutions are determined by charters granted by the separate States, there is almost complete freedom to experiment, going so far as the "home rule" charter by which some

States allow each city to settle its own charter on whatever lines it likes by referendum.

Research is undertaken on an immense scale, by official "boards of municipal research," by efficiency surveys, municipal and voluntary, by leagues of municipalities, by universities, by annual conventions of local government officers, and by advisory State commissions.

The results of all these varied activities are good; for instance, education has been made a free and generous affair in contrast to the system prevailing here.

Mr. Griffith proceeds to account for the superiority of the United States by two things. The first is the fact that they raise local revenue by a tax on the capital value of property, which creates wealth, as against our rates on the annual value which destroy wealth, and are responsible for the notorious and niggardly psychology of the ratepayer. The second is that American cities have home rule, responsibility and freedom from central control, whereas the responsibility of English cities is undermined by control from Whitehall.

Mr. Griffith has rendered a real service by undertaking so comprehensive a survey of English and American conditions, and by his courage in attempting to draw definite conclusions from the evidence. The comparative history (contained in the first volume) is useful and interesting. The conclusions are stimulating and challenging rather than convincing. For instance, he states (p. 457) in support of his demand for a tax on capital that the basic reason for the housing difficulties in this country is the rating system. He shows that corrupt State control for partisan ends is bad for American cities, and uses this as an argument against the British system of administrative control by grants-in-aid.

He finally expresses the belief that British local government will come out right in the end because "the Nordic instinct remains strong"! And his conclusion as to the increased efficiency of American local government is flatly contradicted by so high an authority as Professor Munro of Harvard, who in the 1923 edition of "The Government of American Cities" states that "City government remains the one conspicuous failure of American democracy."

But the book as a whole is of real value, as the first serious attempt to persuade English readers that the United States is the "world's laboratory of municipal research," and that many of their developments are well worthy of serious study by local authorities in this country.

E. D. SIMON.

## FICTION

**Portrait of Clare.** By FRANCIS BRETT YOUNG. (Heinemann. 15s.)

**The Old Countess.** By ANNE DOUGLAS SEDGWICK. (Constable. 7s. 6d.)

**The Counterfeits.** By MARJORIE STRACHEY. (Longmans. 7s. 6d.)

**The Secret Mountain, and Other Tales.** By KENNETH MORRIS. With Decorations by K. ROMNEY TOWNDROW. (Faber & Gwyer. 12s. 6d.)

**Decadence.** By MAXIM GORKY. Translated by VERONICA SCOTT-GATTY. (Cassells. 7s. 6d.)

**The Restitution of the Bride, and Other Stories.** Translated from the Chinese by E. BUTTS HOWELL. With Illustrations by a Native Artist. (Werner Laurie.)

It is doubtful whether Mr. Young has been wise in adding another to the list of long novels which have appeared in the last twelvemonth. "An American Tragedy" is long because its author is a writer of massive talent, who, no matter how clumsily he may tell a story, contrives to make every detail solid. "The World of William Clissold," indefensible as it is, is long because Mr. Wells has an interesting and vigorous personality, and, it seems, an inexhaustible number of things to say. But an excuse for the length of "Portrait of Clare" (the story is between 200,000 and 300,000 words) is hard to find. Mr. Young has not very much to say; his talent is not massive, nor his treatment of detail very exact; and one can only conclude that his novel is so long because his method is so leisurely. But there seems no reason why a book should be any longer than it must. Length not merely presents advantages; it involves responsibilities. The longer a novel is the more

intensely must it interest us at every point if we are to continue the labour of reading it to the end. When one considers how packed and how solid is "War and Peace," and yet how difficult to read at one stretch, one is surprised at the hope implied in Mr. Young's production of his latest work. For the interest of the book is slight, the characters are unexciting, which means that they are not very profoundly realized, and the style, under its appearance of competent grace, is often loose. Even in the early love scenes, where it tightens, it is approximate where it should be exact. "The tone of his voice was so awed and bewildered that a new sense of his strangeness and her insecurity began to trouble her." What Mr. Young wished to convey here is admirable, but it is diffused in a haze of words. A little farther on Clare is thinking: "She realized that she knew nothing about him; nothing at all except that she loved him. Was love enough?" Really a young girl like Clare would not ask herself this; these precise words would never form themselves in her mind; and if a question occurred to her it would be something quite different, faintly resembling this, which Mr. Young has not succeeded in defining. I quote these passages because they show how the whole book is written, and explain both its length and its failure to keep one's attention. Always the author is content with the approximate; sometimes the approximation is near enough; but the hiatus is there the whole time, narrow or wide, and the book never takes on the definition of literature.

In "The Old Countess," too, the hiatus gapes before us, though at times, so adroit is the author, it seems almost to disappear. Mrs. Sedgwick has finesse; her observation on secondary matters is discriminating; she is more exact in distinguishing between different types than Mr. Young; but when one has assessed all her merits one discovers that her most solid quality, the basis on which her imagination works, is sentimentality. Her hero's lip actually "curls"; her heroine is the type who at heart-breaking crises exclaims: "Steady, old boy; steady," dissolving everything into nonsense; her wicked old countess is a villainess of the conventional pattern; and from her very "French" inn-keeper and his wife to Marthe, the nonsensically noble victim, her characters have no essential reality. Deprived of its secondary qualities, its surface discrimination and finesse, the story might be a sentimental best-seller calculated to go straight to the public's heart without awakening a suspicion. Mrs. Sedgwick's combination of gifts is very curious.

"The Counterfeits" is the opposite in many ways of "The Old Countess." Miss Strachey has no finesse, her management of her story is clumsy, her observation of externals crude; but she has imagination, and tries to describe her characters as they are. The construction of the book is awkward; we are shown the matrimonial muddles of a set in London, and in the background a more tragic muddle recreated in memory by one of the characters, who was a participant in it. The psychological improbabilities which the author has to invent to set this stream of memory going ruin the story; it is impossible to credit that just in this way the heroine would remember. Yet in their different styles both parts of the novel, the part describing life in London, and that evoking more poignantly past things, are unusually good. How uncertain is Miss Strachey's command of her gifts is shown again very clearly in the absurd and indiscreetly happy ending. But her gifts are genuine and with better management might produce something remarkable.

"The Restitution of the Bride" has little literary interest. These stories, though Chinese, are sentimental in the usual way, and the translation is poor. "Decadence," translated with admirable force, shows that Gorky is still one of the greatest of living writers. Though his construction is faulty, as it has always been in his longer books, his mastery of detail is unsurpassed, and sufficient to set him by himself. "Decadence" should not be missed.

Mr. Kenneth Morris is a too faithful disciple of Mr. Cabell. His style is even more meretricious and soft, and is quite unenlivened by wit. The book could only have been written by someone who has nothing to say.

EDWIN MUIR.



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## VAUGHAN

**On the Poems of Henry Vaughan: Characteristics and Intimations.** With his principal Latin poems carefully translated into English verse. By EDMUND BLUNDEN. (Cobden-Sanderson. 5s.)

THERE is a certain intellectual inadequacy especially marked in feminine natures which causes the illusion that if you are childish you are following the Christian recommendation to grown-ups to become as little children. The gospel idea is presumably that we should accept the state of manhood or womanhood, the fuller life of maturity, without hypocrisies, as a matter of course. But moral timidity, when it touches mature life at all, tends to play at a game of tip and run. Afraid of all maturity, intellectual, emotional and physical, it skedaddles back as far as it can then often cries because it cannot go back further still. This recessionism is one of the commonest of minor psycho-pathological states. And in romantic literatures especially, the sentimental expression of it is rampant. "Hamlet" is the most obvious example in English—as "Measure for Measure" is a notorious example of the tip-and-run method of writing, of artistic cowardice. The author found himself tipping the tragedy of Isabella and her brother, so he fled away into the trivial comedy of Mariana and the Duke. It is on a par with that genteel retreat from the tragic city of Webster and Marlowe and Donne to Stratford-on-Avon. Instances of retreat amongst English writers since are numerous. Vaughan probably touched manhood in the army. He even wrote love poetry. But it was of the fashionable kind, "mild if elegant," Professor Grierson calls it. And he early turned away to become a pious country doctor. Wordsworth tipped life in France and fled from it back to the lakes and the recollections of his early childhood. There was Lamb. There are to-day whole groups of self-consciously childish (and, what is more unlovely, of self-consciously schoolboyish) writers in England. Peter Pan is their pet, they have no God, but the countryside in their Heaven, and Vaughan is one of their saints.

Mr. Blunden emphasizes the childish side of Vaughan's work. He inscribes the line "O purer years of light and grace" on his title page. Who, he asks, can refuse to call Vaughan great "when the light of childhood appears in his work, as it so often does with its double beauty of earth and heaven, undwindled, unsullied"? In Vaughan's mind the word "young" is "charged with a yearning pathos." Not only the "Ode on Intimations of Immortality" but "The Child Angel" of Lamb are linked up with "The Retreat." What was Elia "but a man in love with his own childhood"? And not only Lamb but Hazlitt "with his rich lamenting love of his childhood must have awakened a strain of beatitude in the soul of the Silurist." There is, of course, no question as to the sentimental appeal of what is childlike. But it is futile and wearisome to dwell on it and the literature of it often rings false or even unpleasantly. Besides, childhood itself is often more daring than are those who sentimentalize about it.

It is a relief to turn from this vain regret for what is not possible to Vaughan's more mature interest in the actualities of his day. Here he is not at all the angel child. He is as uncharitable as the most unangelic of adults in denouncing his enemies. Biblical criticism is, of course, "impious wit." Republicans are "black parasites." Music is "lascivious." Dancing is "a vain, sinful art." And though the Puritans will go to hell for abolishing the celebration of Christmas, he has nothing good to say of a lady who celebrated Christmas by wearing flowers. At which even Mr. Blunden feels bound to admit that he "runs amuck with his convictions." It is no great matter that Vaughan's convictions sometimes became mere prejudices. It is quite natural. But Mr. Blunden has not realized that the ordinary human capacity for prejudice was inherent in Vaughan's character and not altogether caused by the state of England in the seventeenth century. His portrait is less vivid in consequence. Absence of vividness, however, is almost the only criticism that can be made against this sympathetic and gracefully written little essay in literary psychology.

Of Vaughan as artist Mr. Blunden does not say very

much, nor is there much to be said. Verbal felicities are fairly frequent in Vaughan's work, but from the sublime he often descends not to the ridiculous but to what Mr. Blunden justly calls "pedestrian insipidity." It can scarcely be said that the translations of the Latin poems which Mr. Blunden has made are marked by as many verbal felicities as one would find if Vaughan himself had made them, but they have simplicity, directness and grace, and retain probably more of the spirit of the originals than would be possible in translations made by any other poet of our day.

## DEPARTMENTAL DITTIES

**The Great Delusion.** By "NEON." (Benn. 12s. 6d.)

**Air Facts and Problems.** By LORD THOMSON. (Murray. 6s.)

"I think an air-balloon quite fairly can  
Be made the emblem of a wicked man."

LORD THOMSON has unearthed this charming couplet, but "Neon" deserves to have written it. It is a happy coincidence that these two books appear at the same time. Lord Thomson was Secretary of State for Air in the late Labour Ministry; no one knows who "Neon" is—rumour asserts him to be a lady—but he certainly identifies himself, even violently, with the interests of the Navy, and so the general public can act as umpire in a very pretty inter-departmental fight which has been waging for some years now. But the two books differ widely in scope and temper. Lord Thomson touches lightly and delicately on what may be called the naval complex: "Few naval officers of the old school can rid themselves of the idea that high-water mark is continued vertically upward. . . . Once high-water mark is crossed, going seaward, Neptune's trident should reach up and hook the joy-stick." "Neon," on the other hand, a Fundamentalist, has a mission to blast all aircraft—and particularly airships—from the face of the sky.

To this end he has amassed, with the amazing patience and absence of humour of the fanatic, an enormous quantity of quotations from every available source, everything, in fact, that has ever been said in public against aircraft, either here or in America, by admirals, politicians, pilots, engine-designers, and Air Ministers. They are thrown down without any perception of their relative importance, official reports, *obiter dicta*, pages from Hansard, truncated, if necessary, to imply the opposite of what the speaker intended. And, as everything can be made evidence if it is used in the right way, the leisurely survey flight in South Africa is taken as the standard of speed (Alcock's crossing of the Atlantic in sixteen hours is not mentioned); the Spaniard Franco—a fine pilot—is sneered at, because, having flown to South America safely, he did not attempt to return by air, but "accepted passage in a destroyer" (he had been instructed to present his machine to the Argentine Government), and so on—these instances of a rather unscrupulous method are not specially chosen, there are dozens of others equally glaring.

Then, when he falls back on argument, "Neon" exhibits a fundamental muddleheadedness which makes him almost impregnable. Misled perhaps by the claims of inventors—who are notoriously optimistic, otherwise they would never invent anything—he persists in taking for granted that the final development of aeroplanes and airships has been reached, and judges by the standard of perfection something which is still in the experimental stage. By the same token, he disapproves of wireless, but approves of trains. Here Lord Thomson may remind him that " . . . Queen Victoria refused to travel in a train. . . . She was finally persuaded to run the risk by the Prince Consort, who, himself, rarely left the railway station without admonishing the engine-driver for having gone too fast." On technical points "Neon," too, can be funny. Perhaps the gem is this quaint statement of the principle of flight: "Approximately four-fifths of the total power installed is required to maintain the aeroplane and its load in the air against the law of gravity, about one-fifth remains to push or pull the load along." Whereas, in sober fact, as thousands of people could have demonstrated to him on the back of an old envelope, it is the forward movement of the machine which maintains it in the air "against the law of



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gravity." After all "only Satan can rebuke sin, the good don't know enough." Any pilot speaking at ease among his equals could say more damaging things about aircraft than can be found in this portentous, rather absurd volume. And doubtless "Neon" would think he had conclusively damned aviation for all time.

With regard to the use of aeroplanes in war: *parti-pris*, and ignorance of the elementary principles of strategy make "Neon's" observations on the inutility of aeroplanes for defence, attack or reconnaissance negligible. He becomes, however, unpleasantly hypocritical when he pleads the "sacrosanct" and traditional rights of the civil population as an argument against aerial bombardment, and demands in the same breath that the Navy be "given back its ancient right of blockade." To attempt to keep the weapons of war out of date with the scientific discoveries of peacetime is merely, in Lord Thomson's phrase, "to compromise with evil," and to make, moreover, a futile bargain which never has and never will be honoured in the event. Not that "Neon" is a pacifist—anything but—only his affection for the Navy has led him to entertain the grotesque idea that to starve out an enemy civil population is "chivalrous" and to bomb them is wicked.

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THESE are two uncommonly good books, and augur well for the series of "Great English Churchmen" of which they are the first instalments. If Mr. Sidney Dark, the editor, is as fortunate in his later contributors, and if the subjects selected are of such general interest as those already announced, the series should take its place beside the "English Men of Letters." Bound in black cloth, with gilt lettering and tops, and well printed on good paper, the volumes are pleasing to eye and hand, and, if we may judge by first impressions, Mr. Dark intends his team to avoid partisanship and to steer a middle course between severity and smartness.

The "Cranmer" is a model of what such a monograph should be. It is admirably proportioned, and supplies just what is essential in the most lucid and attractive manner possible. The style is terse and vivid, essentially sober and dignified, yet pervaded by a steady glow of humour and colour. The author has moulded his material into a unity, so that the figure of Cranmer illuminates the background of his age, as the background illuminates the figure. And Canon Deane's judgment is as sound as his craftsmanship. It is, perhaps, ironical that, having been called upon to include Cranmer among "Great English Churchmen," he should decide that "the gentle and perplexed founder of Anglicanism," to use Mr. Trevelyan's phrase, was great neither in character nor Churchmanship. That, however, is his conclusion. The fine gesture of Cranmer's death must not blind us to the ignoble details of his life; nor must we go to the other extreme of regarding him as a mere time-serving politician. Cranmer's religion may have been "academic, frigid, and devoid of emotion," yet its reality is beyond dispute; "his piety and habits of prayer, if they were untinted by passion, were untainted by pretence." The weakness of Cranmer lay in the abject submission to despotism, which made him sincerely believe that the king could do no wrong and that the Church existed as his instrument. To this doctrine was added in time the equally fixed conviction that the Pope could do no right; and "it was the conjunction of these ideas which brought about the final dilemma of his life, when a monarch, whom it was his duty to obey, required submission to a Pope whom it was his duty to defy." A restrained, yet poignant, sense of drama inspires Canon Deane's presentment of the tragedy of this unfortunate man, drawn by chance out of the placid atmosphere of Cambridge, where for twenty-six years his life had been one of quiet usefulness, into the arena of public affairs for which he was wholly unsuited.

Dr. Hutton's "Wesley" is equally readable, and only slightly less balanced. He maintains that the condition of

the Church of England in the eighteenth century was not so low as it is commonly represented, and that Wesley's secession was due to his impetuous and despotic temper rather than to necessity. But, apart from this indefensible suggestion, Dr. Hutton's portrait is drawn with freshness, sympathy, and catholicity. We are shown not merely Wesley the evangelist, but Wesley the scholar, the literary critic, the observant traveller, the reformer, and the man of affairs; and just emphasis is laid upon the fact that Wesley, if he did not escape all the dangers of his doctrine of assurance, had "a sound, strong head" as well as a warm heart. The quotations from Wesley's "Journal" and letters are made with excellent taste, and his love affairs are not overlooked.

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The bulk of the volume consists of a series of public lectures delivered in the University of London, in connection with the establishment of a School of War Studies. This sets the keynote of the book, and both the introductory address, by Lord Grey of Fallodon, and Sir George Aston's inaugural lecture, are devoted to a weighty plea for the systematic study of war by civilians.

This plea is very necessary to-day, for the growing belief that war is a preventable evil has led many thoughtful people to regard the study of military history as demoralizing, or at best, irrelevant to the real problems of modern life. This attitude is surely mistaken. We shall not get rid of war merely by refusing to think about it. As Lord Grey here reminds us, human memories are short, and it is only "by bringing home to each succeeding generation what the realities of modern war are" that we shall build up that "will to peace" without which all machinery for arbitration or conciliation will be ineffective.

That is not all. The Study of War, as defined by Sir George Aston, embraces an examination of its causes and its effects; the objects for which wars were fought, and the degree in which they were attained. Such study, if undertaken soberly and without prejudice, should afford the means of proving or disproving the theories so airily advanced about the "inevitability" of war. It should also throw useful light on the actual machinery by which the menace of war may be reduced: Sir George Aston instances, particularly, the relation between modern processes of mobilization and the delaying clauses of the Locarno Pacts.

For the present, war remains a possibility, which we have to face while we strive to eliminate it, and modern war is not an affair merely of professional armies and navies. The whole energies of the nation are engaged, and the supreme direction of the war remains, necessarily, in civilian hands. But while the professional is apt to become limited in vision through concentration on technical detail, the civilian is equally apt to blunder because, while he sees clearly what is desirable, he ignores the technical conditions of supply, transport, and the like, which render an operation possible or impossible. It is desirable, therefore, that the civilian, and especially the statesman, shall have, at least, some elementary knowledge of the weapons and methods of war, and the lectures by Vice-Admiral Sir H. W. Richmond, Major-General Sir Edmund Ironside, Air Vice-Marshal H. R. M. Brooke-Popham, and Brigadier-General H. Hartley, on Sea, Land, Air, and Chemical Warfare, respectively, form an introduction to this branch of the subject.

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THE Everyman Series (Dent, 2s.) still keeps its pre-eminence among pocket editions. The 1927 volumes are various and interesting. There are two from the eighteenth century: Smollett's "Roderick Random" and Sterne's "Sentimental Journey," with the less familiar "Journal to Eliza." Mr. Saintsbury has again written an introduction to the Sterne. There are a number of books which have long been hard to come by in convenient and cheap editions. First, there is Hind's translation of Vasari's "Lives of the Painters." Then Professor Vaughan introduces Milton's "Areopagitica," Professor Nicoll "Holinshed's Chronicle," and Mr. G. D. H. Cole, Robert Owen's "A New View of Society," which students have long been wanting. The poetry is mixed. One of the most valuable volumes is a translation of Anglo-Saxon poetry by Professor Gordon. Edgar Allan Poe's poems and essays appear with an introduction by Andrew Lang, and Mr. Rhys himself offers us Kingsley's verse. Biography is represented by Binn's "Abraham Lincoln," and adventure by Mayne Reid's "Boy Slaves." Finally, Barbusse's "Le Feu" appears in English as "Under Fire."

In the Traveller's Library (Cape, 3s. 6d.) Miss Jewett's "The Country of the Pointed Firs" is suitably sponsored by the leading novelist of to-day's New England.

Messrs. Dent's school books continue, and many of them are attractive. In their King's Treasury Series there are English plays with usual notes, but also with directions for amateur actors, and it is refreshing to find not only "King Lear," "Much Ado," and "She Stoops to Conquer," but also the "Shoemaker's Holiday." There are several volumes of verse and prose selections, stories by Beatrice Harraden, and essays by Alpha of the Plough: W. H. Hudson is represented as well as Swift, Kinglake, and Melville.

In their "Modern Studies Series" Messrs. Nelson offer an anthology of sixteenth-century French verse, Lemaitre's "Contes Blancs," and a good selection from French authors, including Guy de Maupassant and Anatole France, as well as Daudet and Erckmann-Chatrian. There is also an interesting little book, "La France Laborieuse," made up of extracts from well-known French writers dealing with the economic life of contemporary France. In their "Teaching of English Series" there appear "Longer Poems from Geoffrey Chaucer to Francis Thompson" (Patten Poetry, Part III.), a selection from Scott's verse, a collection of the popular fairy stories retold by Mrs. Craik, and "Little Plays from Shakespeare."

"Round the Wonderful World" and "Plays from History" (Nelson, 1s.) are charming books to learn to read from, and no doubt "Work and Workers" (Nelson, 2 Parts) which gives an account of those who "feed," "shelter," "warm," "clothe," protect and do other things for us is a great improvement on the "Child's Guides to Knowledge," which once attempted to serve the same purpose. It still seems to suggest, however, that other countries necessarily produce very inferior policemen, sailors, and miners.

"Plutarch's Lives of Greek Heroes" (Blackie, 2s.), and "Benvenuto Cellini," in the World's Classics (Humphrey Milford, 2s.), complete the list.

## ON THE EDITOR'S TABLE

"ISAAC NEWTON" (Bell, 10s. 6d.) is a memorial volume edited for the Mathematical Association by W. J. Greenstreet, and includes essays by Prof. Eddington and many other distinguished mathematicians and some unpublished documents and letters of Newton. "Plant Autographs and their Revelations," by Sir J. C. Bose (Longmans, 7s. 6d.), is an interesting account of the author's researches written for the ordinary reader. "The Theory of Polarity," by Geoffrey Sainsbury (Putnam, 7s. 6d.), attempts to show a connection in the "polarity" of sex, civilization, mathematics, chemistry, &c.

The Department of Overseas Trade publishes "Reports on the Present Position of the Industrial Arts as indicated at the International Exhibition, Paris, 1925" (7s. 6d.), which should interest manufacturers and designers.

"The Ettrick Shepherd," by Edith C. Batho (Cambridge Press, 7s. 6d.), is a study of the life and writings of James Hogg. "Gautier and the French Romantics," by John G. Palache (Cape, 10s. 6d.), is both critical and anecdotic; it is also illustrated. "The Appeal of Jazz," by R. W. S. Mendl (Philip Allan, 6s.), discusses the origins, effects, and values of the syncopated music which seems to have a hurricane appeal to our generation.

The following travel books may be noted: "Silver Cities of Yucatan," by Gregory Mason (Putnam, 15s.), and "Yarns of the Seven Seas," by Commander F. G. Cooper (Heath Cranton, 7s. 6d.).

"Melanesians of the South-East Solomon Islands," by W. G. Ivens (Kegan Paul, 30s.), is an anthropological work. "East Africa, a New Dominion," by Major A. G. Church (Witherby, 18s.), deals with the controversial subject of the development, political and economic, of British East Africa.

## BOOKS IN BRIEF

**The Stock Exchange Official Intelligence for 1927.** (Spottiswoode. 60s.)

This great work of reference, issued under the auspices of the Committee of the Stock Exchange, continues to grow in size and in scope. This year particulars are added about 310 additional companies and 47 new loans, involving a total sum of £302,000,000, with the result that the volume now exceeds 2,000 pages. It is a wonderful compilation, the accuracy of which is seldom or never found at fault, and is indispensable to anyone who is responsible for the handling of investments. The miscellaneous information given this year includes a synopsis of the Electricity (Supply) Act, 1926, and particulars of the United States War Debt Settlements.

**The World Policy of Germany, 1890-1912.** By OTTO HAMMANN. (Allen & Unwin. 12s. 6d.)

This book covers much the same ground as the many volumes on German foreign policy that have appeared since the war, though it does not deal directly with the question of responsibility. The author traces all his country's misfortunes to the failure to understand and follow Bismarck's theories, and in particular to the loss of successive opportunities of a *rapprochement* with Great Britain. His conclusion that "of all the rôles which William II. has played, probably that of Peace Kaiser is the greatest," is scarcely borne out by his own arguments; the Kaiser represents no policy, pacific or otherwise—merely an incalculable element, capable in any situation of producing a catastrophe for a whim of personal vanity. His refusal of a naval agreement at Friedrichshof is the irrevocable blunder which finally established the supremacy of the Tirpitz policy. Peace, in the author's view, would have been secured through "an understanding between the strongest land Power and the strongest naval Power"—a sound conclusion from defective reasoning. The book contains fewer "revelations" than one would expect from the author's position as former head of the Press Department in the German Foreign Office.

**The Koran.** Translated by GEORGE SALE. (Warne. 2s. 6d.)

Sale's translation of the Koran is nearly two centuries old. It was reprinted in the Chandos Classics in 1877. The revival of that series and the republication of this volume are welcome, particularly in the admirable form and the cheap price of 2s. 6d. Sir E. Denison Ross contributes an interesting introduction.



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**Meals on a Tray. Cold Savoury Meals. Puddings.** By MRS. C. F. LEYEL. (Routledge. 1s. 6d. each.)

These are three books in the excellent "Lure of Cookery" series. They should be of great use to cooks, both professional and amateur, and to those whose duty it is daily to confer with a cook. Puddings and cold meals are the two great snags in ordinary domestic cookery, and Mrs. Leyel's recipes and suggestions should greatly increase the repertory of many households. Her chapter on cold fish, for instance, opens vistas which are usually ignored. Meals on a tray are becoming more and more the normal way of working some households, and the method economizes service. Here again Mrs. Leyel should prove of great use.

## NEW GRAMOPHONE RECORDS

### COLUMBIA RECORDS

THE Lener Quartet have produced an exceptionally fine record of one of the earlier of Mozart's quartets, in D minor (three 12-in. records. L1965-7. 6s. 6d. each). The first three movements are extraordinarily beautiful, and they are perfectly played by the Lener Quartet. The fourth movement is a little thin.

The Columbia have a large number of vocal records this month, among which there should be something to suit all tastes. Perhaps the best are two choral records. The Scala Chorus of Milan is always good; this time with the famous baritone Mariano Stabile they give us "Brindisi" from Verdi's "Otello," and the popular "Te Deum" from "La Tosca" (L1969. 6s. 6d.). Even more interesting is a record by the Hallé Chorus of "By the Wayside" from Elgar's "The Apostles" (L1968. 6s. 6d.). Two 10-in. records are devoted to songs from Puccini's last opera "Turandot," the performers being Bianca Scacciati, soprano, and Francesco Merli, tenor (D1570-1. 4s. 6d. each). Other vocal records are "Ah si ben mio" and "Di quella pira," from "Il Trovatore," sung by John O'Sullivan, tenor (D1573. 4s. 6d.); "Fiddler of Dooney" and "The Lark of the Clear Air," sung by W. F. Watt, tenor (4296. 3s.); "O Peaceful Night" and "O Hush thee, my Babe," sung by the Salisbury Singers (4298. 3s.); and "In this Hour of Softened Splendour," and a musical jest, by the Sheffield Choir (9194. 4s. 6d.).

Light music is provided by Rubinstein's "Toreador et Andalouse" and Block's "Milenka, Serenade," played by the Jean Lensen Orchestra (4293. 3s.). There are also three records of organ solos, Suppé's "Poet and Peasant" Overture, played by Quentin Maclean (4318. 3s.); Fibich's "Poem" and the Triumphal March from Grieg's "Sigurd Jorsalfar," played by W. Steff-Langston (4320. 3s.); and Coleridge-Taylor's Intermezzo in C and Brahms's Hungarian Dance, No. 5, by the same (4319. 3s.).

### BELTONA RECORDS

A 3s. record contains "The Shepherd and his Fife" and "Waly, Waly," sung by Annette Blackwell, soprano (6074). Among the 2s. 6d. records are "The Old Rustic Bridge" and "Marguerite," sung by Hughes Macklin, tenor (1175); "Wee Willie Winkle" and "The Piper o' Dundee," sung by Mrs. A. M. Henderson (1171); "Thinking of You" and "Everything's made for love," by the Beltona Male Quartet (1180); "Last May a braw wooer" and "The Night before Christmas," sung by Bertha Waddell (1155); "Shepherd of the Hills" and "Hello, Bluebird," foxtrots, Avenue Dance Orchestra (1174).

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## THE OWNER-DRIVER THE RENOVATION OF CARS

I AM living a deceitful life this week. Everybody thinks I've got still another new car and some very nice things are being said about its smart and wonderfully complete equipment.

One's purchases of new cars average a couple per annum, but I have never parted with a 20-70 h.p. Crossley bought in 1923, and it has come back from the coach-builders looking, I think, smarter than ever.

A better cellulose finish I have never seen. The body panels and wings were rubbed down to the metal face to ensure a safe start, and the result is a polish equal to the original coach paint and varnish. A new shade of smoke blue, with silver lines to match the electro-plate fittings, appeals to me very much.

But it is not merely the renovation of the coachwork that delights the eye. I have had the whole of the fittings replated—radiator casing, bonnet caps and strips, wind-screen frame, ventilators, door handles, hinges and tank cap. The aluminium hub caps, step-mat frames and registration plates have been reburnished. Lamps have been re-enamelled black, the rims replated and reflectors polished.

The success of the renovation scheme is largely due to the replating, and it seems to have come as a surprise to my friends to learn that the appearance of a car can be so vastly improved by a comparatively modest outlay upon the metal fittings.

The grey antique leather upholstery has been cleaned, and is almost indistinguishable from new.

In windscreen wipers I have a strong partiality for the electrical type, and one of the original "Berkshires," with a single squeegee, has been replaced with the latest model, the Silent Berkshire with two squeegees—a very neat and effective device.

For the greatest improvement of all, however, I have my coachbuilder to thank. He suggested the addition of an adjustable sun-shade of blue glass, fitted over the upper panel of the wind-screen.

How tiring and how dangerous it is to drive against the dazzling rays of the setting sun as one runs westward from Town after the day's business! In search of a remedy I have in past years spent a little fortune in coloured eye-glasses and patent spectacles, but they are not always at hand when most needed.

The new sun-visor is, of course, a permanent attachment, and may be adjusted to an angle to protect one's eyes from the dazzling headlights of approaching cars. Day or night it gives a restful feeling which adds tremendously to the pleasure of both driver and passengers.

I have never seen this shade advertised, but it is stamped "Parsolazur." The makers are hiding a brilliant light under a bushel!

It is a wise policy when renovating a car that has been in use a couple of years or more to overhaul the electric wiring and replace any sections that show signs of corrosion or disintegration. It is the best safeguard against short circuits and lighting failures.

In the special number of a well-known motoring journal last week-end I saw a sketch showing how accumulators may be recharged in one's own garage. The battery had been taken off the car and placed on a table, near a charging device fitted on the wall. But why go to the trouble of disconnecting the cables and removing accumulators from the car? If wires fixed to the positive and negative terminals are carried to a socket somewhere inside the car, connection with the charging device may be made in an instant by pushing a plug into the socket! This is how my electrical storage is kept in tip-top order, without disturbing the batteries; in fact I never look at them except to add distilled water and to see that the terminals are kept well covered with vaseline.

RAYNER ROBERTS.

Mr. Rayner Roberts has for many years been recognized as an exceptionally well-informed writer on motoring subjects, and his wide experience as an Owner-Driver is at the service of our readers. Communications should be addressed to the Motor Editor, THE NATION AND ATHENÆUM, 38, Great James Street, London, W.C.1.





## "A HOPEFUL SIGN OF NATIONAL STABILITY"

The Rt. Hon. Stanley Baldwin, M.P.

The above is an extract from a letter from the Prime Minister, the immediate context of which reads as follows:—

"This tendency towards house-ownership is a noteworthy feature of post-war housing progress, and is a hopeful sign of national stability. The work and aims of the Building Societies will commend themselves to all thinking people."

Mr. Baldwin's concluding statement is particularly appropriate to the Abbey Road Society, which occupies the proud position of being the largest London Building Society. Its funds exceed £6,000,000, and its total membership exceeds 60,000

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## FINANCIAL SECTION

## THE WEEK IN THE CITY

## NEW YORK STOCK EXCHANGE REPORT—AMERICAN RAILROADS—OIL DIVIDENDS.

THE American mails this week brought us the report, dated May 1st, of the President of the New York Stock Exchange. It is not particularly interesting, but it is good publicity. It is common knowledge that the publicity of the London Stock Exchange is of an elementary and futile order. If only the Committee were to follow the New York example and publish an annual report on Stock Exchange work and usefulness, it would obtain in one day Press notices of far greater value than a whole year's uninspired advertising. The New York Stock Exchange has a special Committee on Publicity which issues articles and pamphlets of an educational sort and arranges for visits of inspection. Over 65,000 visitors saw the New York stock brokers at work during 1926. In Throgmorton Street a visitor might be killed. The proper sense of publicity has caused the New York Stock Exchange to go further and publish on the first of each month a statement of the aggregate net money borrowings of its members on collateral in New York. This was begun on February 1st, 1926, and was another step forward in gaining public confidence. From February 1st to January 1st, 1927, these brokers' loans fell by \$220 million to \$3,292 million, while in the same period the market value of securities listed on the New York Stock Exchange had increased by \$3,345 million to \$75,543 million. The public can tell roughly from these figures whether or no there is "inflation" on the Stock Exchange.

This year's report of the New York Stock Exchange gives a useful comparison between the amount of foreign securities listed in New York and London. It shows, in the President's words, that "the time when New York may challenge the leadership of London in this respect seems still remote." In New York foreign listed issues are growing, but they account yet for only 9.92 per cent. of the total number and 6.51 per cent. of the total market value of listed issues. Of foreign Government bonds alone there are 820 different issues on the London Stock Exchange against only 138 for New York, 265 for Paris, and 153 for Berlin. As the New York President properly observes: "This huge foreign Government security list on the London Stock Exchange has resulted from over a century of British foreign investing." But the investor should remember that on this account it is often possible to buy a foreign Government bond cheaper in New York than in London. But the market is rarely so free.

Before the war there was a big business in London in American railroad stocks. To-day there is very little. The prosperity of the leading American railroads last year should not on this account escape notice. Bigger earnings and higher dividends point to several American railroad stocks as promising investments. Increased efficiency as well as booming trade has carried the American railroads forward. It is remarkable that while the railways in Great Britain have been professing to be hurt by the competition of motor vehicles, the railroads in the United States, where motor vehicles are denser than in any other part of the world, have been turning road transport to good account. The American railroads have recognized that road transport is useful as a feeder of the railway line: they have not been ashamed to employ the road haulier for short-distance freight traffic, and they are operating motor-bus services in addition to, or, in some cases, in place of, their railroad passenger ser-

vices. Hence, in spite of the decline in the number of passengers carried, the leading railroads are prospering. The only disadvantage, from the Stock Exchange point of view, is that they are largely subject to the control of the Inter-State Commerce Commission. The Commission has prescribed  $5\frac{3}{4}$  per cent. as a reasonable rate of return, and the Transportation Act, under a "recapture" clause, requires the railroads to turn over to the Commission one-half of any excess above 6 per cent. But the "recapture" clause may not come into effect for years. The Commerce Commission will not complete the final valuation of railroad property till 1931. No doubt every valuation will be disputed, and the Courts will have to review the cases. Two of the smaller railroads have already come before the Courts, and the decisions, while tentative, have not been favourable to the Commerce Commission. The following table shows the claimed valuation of a few leading roads in 1925, and the percentage earned on the claimed valuation in that year:—

	1925 Claimed valuation. 000's omitted.	% earned on claimed.
Atchison Topeka and Santa Fé	1,014,927	5.31
New York Central	2,037,045	5.85
Union Pacific	856,648	4.74
Baltimore and Ohio	828,792	5.31
Pennsylvania	2,393,239	4.50
"Nickle Plate"	261,166	4.09

The next table shows the actual earnings per common stock and the dividends paid for the same railroads in 1925 and 1926:—

		Earned Per Share. Divs. Paid.			
		1925.	1926.	1925.	1926.
Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fé	(\$100)	17.19	23.41	7	7
New York Central	(\$100)	12.69	14.52	7	7
Union Pacific	(\$100)	15.41	16.50	10	10
Baltimore and Ohio	(\$100)	12.14	17.20	5	5 $\frac{1}{2}$
Pennsylvania	(\$50)	6.23	6.78	6	6 $\frac{1}{2}$
"Nickle Plate"	(\$100)	16.14	21.48	6	9 $\frac{1}{2}$

Several of these railroads have declared extra dividends this year. Atchison has paid  $\frac{3}{4}$  per cent. extra, making  $2\frac{1}{4}$  per cent. for the first quarter, and Baltimore and Ohio  $\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. extra, making 2 per cent. for the first quarter. Pennsylvania is now paying quarterly dividends at the rate of 7 per cent. per annum, and "Nickle Plate" (New York, Chicago, and St. Louis) at the rate of 11 per cent. per annum. Yields are mostly around 5 per cent. at current prices.

The market has been busy revaluing oil shares on the new dividends. In view of the decline in oil prices the increase in the final dividend of the Shell Transport and Trading (making 25 per cent. tax free, against  $22\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. for 1925) was surprising. Seeing that Shell Transport had received the extra bonus last year of 60 cents a share on its Shell Union holdings, there was no question but that an increase in dividend was possible, but coming at this depressing time it suggests that new financing is not impossible. The Burmah Oil has reduced its dividend rate from 35 per cent. to 30 per cent., but this rate on a capital which has been enlarged by one-third is equivalent to a distribution of 40 per cent. In THE NATION of February 12th we referred to Burmah Oil as one of the oil shares which had become top-heavy. The shares were then standing at  $7\frac{1}{8}$ ; they are now under 6. Anglo-Persian shares at that time were 5 13-16, and are now 4 7-16.

